BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH

THE GREATEST FICTION

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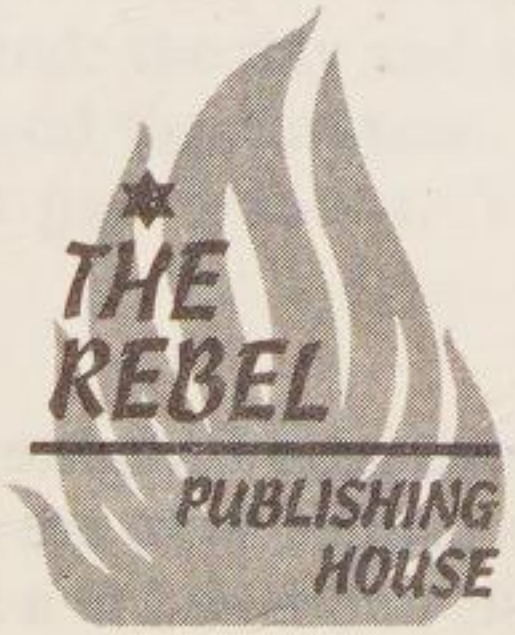
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Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is an Enlightened Master of our time.
All the words printed here are spoken words,
spontaneously addressed to a live audience.

Whenever somebody dies – somebody you have known, loved and lived with, somebody who has become part of your being – something in you also dies. Of course, you will miss the person, a vacuum will be felt; that's natural. But the same vacuum can be converted into a door. And death is a door....

Death is the only phenomenon left which is not corrupted by man. Otherwise man has corrupted everything, polluted everything. Only death still remains virgin, uncorrupted, untouched by the hands of man. Man remains at a loss as to what to do with death. He cannot understand it, he cannot make a science out of it; that's why death is still uncorrupted, and that is the only thing left now in the world.

We have been taught for centuries that death is against life, that death is the enemy of life, that death is the end of life. Of course, we are scared and cannot relax, cannot be in a let-go. And if you cannot be in a let-go with death, you will remain tense in your life, because death is not separate from life.

Unless you accept death, you remain half, you remain part, you remain lopsided. When you accept death also you become balanced. Then all is accepted: the day and the night, the summer and the winter – both the light and the darkness. When both are accepted, both polarities of life, you gain balance. You become tranquil, you become whole.

Compiled by: Mary Amoore, Q.S.M.

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First Edition

Published by The Rebel Publishing House GmbH
Cologne, West Germany

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Printed in West Germany

ISBN 3-89338-029-9

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

The Only Certainty in Life is Death

"Stop the Wheel!" 10
Sacrificing Today for a Fictitious Tomorrow 14
A Door to the Divine 16
The Myth of Mortality 18

PART II

Saviors Are the Death of You

Pseudo-Religions:
Afraid of Death *and* Life 22
The East Has the Yeast,
The West Has the Dough 24
The Root of All Fears 27
An Easy Exploitation 31
Life Should Not Be Mythed 32

PART III

Watch and You Will Know

Why Cling? Simply Sing! 36
Life Is Foreplay,
Death Is Orgasmic 40

PART IV

Journeying to the Center of Your Being

Meditation: The Way Beyond 50
Know Death Without Dying 55
The Center of the Cyclone 56
An Ancient Golden Key 58
Impeccable Awareness
Brings Great Joy 62
The Tibetan Bardo 66
The Transcendent Prince 68
Beauty Without the Beast 74

PART V

Enjoy Totally! – A View from the Sunlit Peaks

From Darkness to Light 78
The Undying Reality 81
Inquire to the Very End 82
A Peep into Yesterday 84
Staying Awake
Through the Movie 87
The Right to Die 92
Celebration Knows
Nothing of Death 94
Learn the Art
While There Is Still Time 95
Wake Up and Sing 98

PART I

THE ONLY CERTAINTY IN LIFE IS DEATH

"Stop the Wheel!"

MY MOTHER'S FATHER suddenly fell ill. It was not time for him to die. He was not more than fifty, or even less, perhaps even younger than I am now. My grandmother was just fifty, at the very peak of her youth and beauty.

I asked her, "He is dead. You loved him. Why are you not weeping?"

She said, "Because of you. I don't want to weep before a child" – she was such a woman – "and I don't want to console you. If I start weeping myself, then naturally you will weep; then who is going to console whom?"

I must describe that situation – we were in a bullock cart going from my grandfather's village to my father's, because the only hospital was there. My grandfather was seriously sick – not only sick, but unconscious too, almost in a coma. She and I were the only other people in the cart. I can understand her compassion for me. She did not even weep at the death of her beloved husband, just because of me – because I was the only one there, and there would be nobody else to console me.

I said, "Don't worry. If you can remain without tears, I can also remain without tears." And, believe it or not, a child of seven remained without tears.

Even she was puzzled; she said, "You are not crying?"

I said, "I don't want to console you."

It was a strange group of people in that bullock cart. Bhoora was driving. He knew that his master was dead, but he would not look inside the bullock cart, not even then, because he was only a servant and it was not his place to interfere in private affairs. That is what he said to me: "Death is a private affair; how can I look? I heard everything from the driving seat. I wanted to cry, I loved him so much. I feel like an orphan – but I could not look back into the cart, otherwise he would never forgive me."

A strange company, and Nana was in my lap. I was a seven-year-old child with death, not just for a few seconds, but continuously for twenty-four hours. There was no road, and it was difficult to reach my father's town. The progress was very slow. We remained with the dead body for

twenty-four hours...and he died slowly, by and by. I could feel death happening to him, and I could see the great silence of it.

I was also fortunate that my Nani was present. Perhaps without her I may have missed the beauty of death, because love and death are so similar, perhaps the same. She loved me. She showered her love upon me, and death was there, slowly happening.

The bullock cart...I can still hear its sound – the rattling of the wheels on the stones, Bhoora continually shouting to the bullocks, the sound of the whip hitting them.... I can hear it all still. It is so deeply rooted in my experience that I don't think even my death will erase it. Even while dying I may again hear the sound of that bullock cart.

I had heard of other people's deaths, but only heard. I had not seen, and even if I had seen, they did not mean anything to me. Unless you love someone and he then dies, you cannot really encounter death. Let that be underlined: *Death can only be encountered in the death of a loved one.*

When love plus death surrounds you, there is a transformation, an immense mutation, as if a new being is born. You are never the same again. But people do not love, and because they do not love, they can't experience death the way I experienced it. Without love, death does not give you the keys to existence. With love, it hands over to you the key to all that is.

My first experience of death was not a simple encounter. It was complex in many ways. The man I had loved was dying. I had known him as my father. He had raised me with absolute freedom, no inhibitions, no suppressions, and no commandments. He never said to me, "Don't do this," or "Don't do that." Only now can I realize the beauty of the man.

I loved the man because he loved my freedom. I can love only if my freedom is respected. If I have to bargain, and get love by paying with my freedom, then that love is not for me. Then it is for lesser mortals, it is not for those who know.

"My Lord, this life you have given to me, I surrender it back to you with my thanks." Those were the dying words of my grandfather, although he never believed in God and was not a Hindu.

Before he died, among other things, he said one thing again and again, "Stop the wheel...." My grandfather was dying and asking us to stop the wheel – what nonsense! How could I stop the wheel? We had to reach the hospital, and without the wheel we would be lost in the forest.

My grandfather said, "Stop the wheel. Rajah, can't you hear me? If I can hear your grandmother's laughter you must be able to hear me."

I said to him, "Don't be worried about her laughter. I know her. She is not laughing at what you're saying, it is something else between us, a joke that I told her."

He said, "Okay. If it is a joke that you told her then it is perfectly okay for her to laugh. But what about the *chakra,* the wheel?"

Now I know, but at that time I was absolutely unacquainted with such terminology. The wheel represents the whole Indian obsession with the wheel of life and death. For thousands of years, millions of people have been doing only one thing: trying to stop the wheel. He was not talking about the wheel of the bullock cart – that was very easy to stop, in fact it was difficult to keep it moving.

I could not understand at that moment why my Nana was so insistent. Perhaps the bullock cart – because there was no road – was making so much noise. Everything was rattling, and he was in agony, so naturally he wanted to stop the wheel. But my grandmother laughed. Now I know why she laughed. He was talking about the Indian obsession with life and death, symbolically called the wheel of life and death – and in short, the wheel – which goes on and on....

That's why my grandfather was saying, "Stop the wheel." If I could have stopped the wheel I would have stopped it, not only for him but for everybody else in the world. Not only would I have stopped it, I would have destroyed it forever so that nobody could ever turn it again. But it is not in my hands.

But why this obsession? I became aware of many things at that moment of his death...that have determined my whole life.

I asked him in his ear, "Nana, have you something to say to me before you depart? Any last words? Or do you want to give me something to remember you by forever?"

He took off his ring and put it in my hand. That ring was always a mystery. His whole life he would not allow anybody to see what was in it, yet again and again he used to look into it. That ring had a glass window on both sides that you could look through. On top was a diamond, on each of its sides there was a glass window. He had not allowed anybody to see what it was that he used to look at through the window. Inside there was a statue of Mahavira, the Jaina *tirthankara* – a really beautiful image, and very small. It must have been a small picture of Mahavira inside, and those two windows were magnifying glasses. They magnified it and it looked really huge.

With tears in his eyes he said, "I don't have anything else to give you because all that I have will be taken away from you too, just as it has been taken away from me. I can only give you my love for the one who has known himself."

Although I did not keep his ring, I have fulfilled his desire. I have known the one, and I have known it in myself. In a ring what does it matter? But the poor old man, he loved his master, Mahavira, and he gave his

love to me. I respect his love for his master, and for me. The last words on his lips were, "Don't be worried, because I am not dying."

We all waited to see if he was going to say something else, but that was all. His eyes closed and he was no more.

My Nani was holding my hand, and I was completely dazed, not knowing what was happening, utterly in the moment. My grandfather's head was in my lap. I held my hands on his chest, and slowly, slowly, the breathing disappeared. When I felt he was no longer breathing I said to my grandmother, "I'm sorry, Nani, but it seems that he is no longer breathing."

She said, "That's perfectly okay. You need not be worried. He had lived enough, there is no need to ask for more." She also told me, "Remember, because these are the moments not to be forgotten; never ask for more. What is, is enough."

I still remember that silence. The bullock cart was passing through a river bed. I exactly remember each detail. I didn't say anything because I didn't want to disturb my grandmother. She did not say a thing. A few moments passed, then I became a little worried about her and said, "Say something; don't be so quiet, it is unbearable."

Can you believe it, she sang a song! That's how I learned that death has to be celebrated. She sang the same song she had sung when she was in love with my grandfather for the first time.

Separation has its own beauty, as does meeting. Separation has its own poetry; one has just to learn its language, and one has to live in its depth. Then out of sadness itself comes a new kind of joy – which looks almost impossible, but it happens, I have known it.

Glimpses of a Golden Childhood,
Excerpts, 1981

Sacrificing Today for a Fictitious Tomorrow

SINCE THE DAY my maternal grandfather died...death became a constant companion to me. That day I also died, because one thing became certain, that whether you live seven years or seventy years – he was seventy years – what does it matter? you have to die.

Such a good man, a beautiful man, simply died. What was the meaning of his life? That became a torturous question to me – what was the meaning? What had he attained? For seventy years he lived the life of a good man; but what was the point of it all? It simply ended – not even a trace was left behind. His death made me immensely serious.

I was serious even before his death. By the age of four I started thinking of problems that people somehow manage to go on postponing to the very end. I don't believe in postponing. I started asking questions to my maternal grandfather and he would say, "These questions! Your whole life is there – there is no hurry – and you are too young."

I said, "I have seen young boys dying in the village: they had not asked these questions, they have died without finding the answer. Can you guarantee me that I will not die tomorrow or the day after tomorrow? Can you give me a guarantee that I will die only after I have found the answer?"

He said, "I cannot guarantee that, because death is not in my hands, nor is life in my hands."

"Then," I said, "you should not suggest to me any postponement. I want the answer now. If you know, then say that you know and give me the answer. If you don't know, then don't feel awkward in accepting your ignorance."

Soon he realized that with me there was no alternative. Either you had to say yes...but it was not easy then; then you had to go into deeper details about it, and you could not deceive me. He started accepting his ignorance, that he didn't know.

I said, "You are very old, soon you will be dying. What have you been

doing for your whole life? At the moment of death you will h
ignorance in your hands and nothing else. And these are vital q
I am not asking you any trivia.

"You go to the temple. I ask you why you go to the temple – have you found anything in the temple? You have been going your whole life, and you try to persuade me to come along with you to the temple." The temple was made by him. One day he accepted that the truth was "because I have made the temple. If even I don't go there, then who is going to go there? But before you, I accept it, that it is futile. I have been going there my whole life and I have not gained anything."

Then I said, "Try something else. Don't die with the question – die with the answer." But he died with the question.

The last time he spoke to me, almost ten hours before he died, he opened his eyes and said, "You were right; postponing is not right. I am dying with all the questions with me. So remember, whatever I was suggesting to you was wrong. You were right, don't postpone. If a question arises, try to find the answer as quickly as possible."

The Rajneesh Bible, Volume III,
January 21, 1985, evening

A Door to the Divine

Vipassana was a lively and very animated sannyasin who lived within the ashram. She was a musician and an ecstatic singer.

Suddenly she was taken ill and it was a shock to everyone to learn she had an inoperable brain tumor....

WHENEVER SOMEBODY DIES – somebody you have known, loved and lived with, somebody who has become part of your being – something in you also dies. Of course, you will miss her – a vacuum will be felt – that's natural. But the same vacuum can be converted into a door. And death is a door to God. Death is the only phenomenon left which is not corrupted by man. Otherwise man has corrupted everything, polluted everything. Only death still remains virgin, uncorrupted, untouched by the hands of man. Man would like to corrupt it also, but he cannot hold it, cannot possess it. It is so elusive – it remains unknowable. And man remains at a loss as to what to do with death. He cannot understand it, he cannot make a science out of it; that's why death is still uncorrupted. Death is the only thing left uncorrupted now in the world.

Use these moments. When suddenly death enters into your consciousness, your whole life feels meaningless. It *is* meaningless. Death reveals a truth. When suddenly you come across death, the very earth underneath you slips away. Suddenly you become aware that this death also implies your death. Every death is everybody's death.

She accepted death. That is one of the most difficult things to do. Only if you are in deep meditation is that possible, otherwise not – because the whole mind, the whole human mind, has been trained against death. We have been taught for centuries that death is against life, that death is the enemy of life, that death is the end of life. Of course, we are scared and cannot relax, cannot be in a let-go.

And if you cannot be in a let-go with death, you will remain tense in your life, because death is not separate from life. It is not the end of life; rather, on the contrary, it is the very crescendo, it is the very climax. And if you are afraid of the climax, naturally you will be unable, you will not

be able in any way, to relax in life also, because everywhere in life, death will be felt to be hidden. You will be frightened.

People who are afraid of death cannot relax in sleep, because sleep is also a very small death that comes every day. People who are afraid of death are afraid of love also, because love is a death. People who are afraid of death become afraid of all orgasmic experiences, because in each orgasm the ego dies. One who is afraid of death will be afraid of everything. He will miss everything.

She relaxed. She died as I wanted her to die – in a deep let-go. She accepted death. She was not in any conflict; she was not struggling. And this is the criterion: that you come to know something tremendously beautiful within yourself which is beyond death. One can relax in death only when one has come to feel something which is deathless.

Unless you accept death, you remain half, you remain part, you remain lopsided. When you accept death also you become balanced. Then all is accepted: the day and the night, the summer and the winter – both the light and the darkness. When both are accepted, both polarities of life, you gain balance. You become tranquil, you become whole.

And if you think of wholeness, then death has to be given its due. Life is beautiful, death is as beautiful as life. Life has its blessings, death has its own blessings. Much flowers in life, but much flowers in death also.

All that God gives you has to be taken in deep gratefulness – even death; only then do you become religious: a grateful acceptance of all, an unconditional acceptance of all. Death is one of the holiest of holies – and uncorrupted by man, yet virgin.

Nothing to Lose but Your Head,
March 12, 1976, evening

The Myth of Mortality

WHEN YOU DIE, on the one side one chapter of life, which people think was your whole life, is closed. It was only a chapter in a book which has infinite chapters. One chapter closes, but the book is not closed. Just turn the page and another chapter begins.

The person dying starts visualizing his next life. This is a known fact, because it happens before the chapter closes. Once in a while a person comes back from the very last point. For example he is drowning, and he is somehow saved. He is almost in a coma; the water has to be taken out, artificial breathing has to be given, and somehow he is saved. He was just on the verge of closing the chapter. These people have reported interesting facts.

One is that at the last moment, when they felt that they were dying, that it was finished, their whole past life went before them, in a flash – from birth to that moment. Within a split second they saw everything that had happened to them, that they had remembered, and also that which they had never remembered, many things which they have not even taken note of, and that they were not aware were part of their memory. The whole film of memory goes so quickly, in a flash – and it has to be in a split second because the man is dying, there is no time like three hours to see the whole movie.

And even if you see the whole movie you cannot relate the whole story of a man's life, with small, insignificant details. But everything passes before him – that is a certain and very significant phenomenon. Before ending the chapter he recollects all his experiences, unfulfilled desires, expectations, disappointments, frustrations, sufferings, joys – everything.

The dying man has to see the whole of it before he moves on further, just to recollect it, because the body is going: this mind is not going to be with him, this brain is not going to be with him. But the desire released from this mind will cling to his soul, and this desire will decide his future life. Whatever has remained unfulfilled, he will move towards the target.

So what you do at the moment of your death determines how your birth

is going to be. Most people die clinging. They don't want to die and one can understand why they don't want to die. Only at the moment of death do they recognize the fact that they have not lived. Life has simply passed as if a dream, and death has come. Now there is no more time to live – death is knocking on the door. And when there *was* time to live, you were doing a thousand and one foolish things, wasting your time rather than living it.

Just watch people at the moment of death. Their suffering is not death. Death has no pain in it, it is absolutely painless. It is really pleasant; it is just like a deep sleep. Do you think deep sleep is something painful? But they are not concerned about death, and deep sleep, and pleasure; they are worried about the known that is slipping out of their hands. Fear means only one thing: losing the known and entering into the unknown. Courage is just the opposite of fear. The fear of death is certainly the greatest fear, and the most destructive of your courage.

So I can suggest only one thing. Now you cannot go back to your past death, but you can start doing one thing: Always be ready to move from the known to the unknown, in anything, any experience. Just jump on something that is new...its very newness, its very freshness, is so alluring. Then there is courage.

It is better, even if the unknown proves worse than the known – that is not the point.

They say all that is old is not gold. I say, even if all that is old is gold, forget about it. Choose the new – gold or no gold, it doesn't matter.

Start by a simple exercise, and that is: always remember, whenever there is a choice choose the unknown, the risky, the dangerous, the insecure, and you will not be at a loss.

And only then – this time death can become a tremendously revealing experience.

Courage will come to you. Just start with a simple formula: never miss the unknown. Always choose the unknown and go headlong. Even if you suffer, it is worth it – it always pays. You always come out of it more grown up, more mature, more intelligent.

The Rajneesh Bible, Volume IV,
February 6, 1985, evening
Beyond Enlightenment,
October 5, 1986

PART II

SAVIORS ARE THE DEATH OF YOU

Pseudo-Religions: Afraid of Death *and* Life

Beloved Bhagwan,

In other religions death is almost never spoken of, and when it is mentioned, then tones are grave and fearful. In Your religion, death is talked about freely and happily. Is this significant?

IT IS CERTAINLY one of the most significant things. It determines whether a religion is authentic or pseudo.

The pseudo-religion knows nothing about death.

In fact it knows nothing about life either, hence the fear, fear of both. It is not possible to be afraid only of death, because death is not separate from life, death is part of life. It is not the termination of life, it is an incident *in* life; life continues. Death happens many times, millions of times; it is a mere incident. But the pseudo-religions are afraid of both.

The pseudo-religions are afraid of living too.

You should understand this first; only then can you understand why they are afraid of death. They are all in favor of renouncing life. They are all based on an anti-life attitude: something is wrong in life, life is born out of original sin, it is not right that you are living. Adam and Eve were punished because they wanted to live, they wanted to know, they wanted to understand, explore, inquire – this is their original sin. You are the inheritors of Adam and Eve. You are born in sin.

What Adam and Eve have done the religions have been trying to undo so that you are again accepted by God, welcomed back into heaven. Religions are afraid of life, are afraid of knowing – and they are not separate.

The pseudo-religions teach you to be afraid of life too – they are not only afraid of death. They don't talk about death; it is thought unmannerly to talk about death. It is not good etiquette if you are sitting at a dinner table and you start talking about death. What to say about a dinner

table! – even at the grave when people are gathered together to pay their last homage, they don't talk about death.

Live as intensely as possible, and the very taste of life will give you the clue why death is not to be feared. Once you have known your life, its fire, you will know there is no death.

This life that one comes to know by intense living is eternal.

The feeling of its eternity arises simultaneously as you live. The deeper, the more intensely you live, the quicker you feel there is no death.

In my religion death is celebrated because there is no death. It is only an entry into another life.

We are celebrating birth – people think we are celebrating death – because there is no death as such, because nothing dies, only forms change. Life transmigrates from one form into another; and it should be a moment of rejoicing for all concerned when a person dies, because he is dying only apparently. From our side it feels he is dying; from the other side he is being born.

The Rajneesh Bible, Volume III,
January 10, 1985, evening

The East Has the Yeast, The West Has the Dough

YOUR CONDITIONING HAS given you the idea of one life. The Christian idea, the Jewish idea, the Mohammedan idea – which are all rooted in the Jewish conception that there is only one life – have given the West a tremendous madness for speed. Everything has to be done in such a hurry that you cannot enjoy doing it, and you cannot do it in its entire perfection. You somehow manage to do it, and rush to another thing.

The Western man has been living under a very wrong conception. It has created so much tension in people's minds that they can never be at ease anywhere; they are always on the go, and they are always worried that one never knows when the end is coming. Before the end they want to do everything. But the result is just the opposite; they cannot even manage to do a few things gracefully, beautifully, perfectly.

Their life is so much overshadowed by death that they cannot live joyously. Everything that brings joy seems to be a wastage of time. They cannot just sit silently for an hour, because their mind is saying to them, "Why are you wasting the hour? You could have done this, you could have done that."

It is because of this conception of one life that the idea of meditation never arose in the West. Meditation needs a very relaxed mind, with no hurry, with no worry, with nowhere to go...just enjoying moment to moment, whatever comes.

In the East, meditation was bound to be discovered, just because of the idea of life's eternity – you can relax. You can relax without any fear, you can enjoy and play your flute, you can dance and sing your song, you can enjoy the sunrise and the sunset. You can enjoy your whole life. Not only that, you can enjoy even dying, because death too is a great experience, perhaps the greatest experience in life. It is a crescendo.

In the Western concept, death is the end of life. In the Eastern concept, death is only a beautiful incident in the long procession of life; there will be many, many deaths. Each death is a climax of your life, before another

life begins – another form, another label, another consciousness. You are not ending, you are simply changing the house.

I am reminded of Mulla Nasruddin. A thief entered his house; Mulla was sleeping, not really, just with closed eyes, in between opening them and seeing what the thief was doing. But he did not believe in interfering in people's work. The thief was not interfering with his sleep, why should he interfere with his profession? Let him do it.

The thief was a little concerned that this man seemed to be strange. As he was carrying everything out of the house, sometimes something fell from his hands and there was noise, but Mulla remained completely asleep. A suspicion arose in the thief's mind that this type of sleep is possible only if a man is awake: "What a strange man that he does not say anything; I'm just emptying his whole house!" All the furniture went out, all the pillows went out, everything that was in the house went out.

And when the thief was collecting everything, binding them to carry home, he suddenly felt, "Somebody is following me." He looked back, it was the same man who was asleep. He said, "Why are you following me?"

Mulla said, "No, I'm not following you; we are changing the house. You have taken everything. Now what am I going to do in this house? So I am also coming."

This at-easeness is the Eastern way; even with death the East has followed the idea...just changing the house.

The thief was worried; he said, "Forgive me, take your things."

Mulla said, "No, there is no need. I was thinking myself to change the house; it is almost in ruins. You can't have a worse house than this, and anyway I am a very lazy man. I need somebody to take care of me, and when you have taken everything, why leave me alone?"

The thief became afraid that...he had been stealing his whole life, he had never come across such a man. He said, "You can take your things."

Mulla said, "No, there is not going to be any change. You will have to carry the things, otherwise I am going to the police station. I am behaving like a gentleman, I am not calling you a thief, but just a man who is helping me to change the house."

There is no hurry, so your idea of a short life is a dangerous idea. That's why even though the East is very poor, there is no despair, there is no anguish. The West is rich, but the richness has not brought anything to its spirituality, or its growth; on the contrary, the West is very tense. It should be more relaxed, it has all the comforts of life.

But the basic problem is that deep down the West knows that life is such a short thing; we are standing in a queue, and every moment we are coming closer to death. Since we were born, we started the journey towards the graveyard. Every moment life is being cut – becoming shorter

and shorter. This creates a tension, an anguish, an anxiety. All the comforts, all the luxuries, all the riches become meaningless, because you cannot take them away with you. You will have to go into death alone.

The East is relaxed. First, it does not give death any importance; it is just a change of form. Second, because it is so relaxed you become aware of your inner riches, which will be going with you – even beyond life. Death cannot take them away.

Death can take everything that is outside you, and if you have not grown your inner being, naturally there will be fear that you cannot save anything from death; it will take everything that you have. But if you have grown your inner being, if you have found peace, blissfulness, silence, joy – which are not dependent on anything outside – if you have found your garden of being and seen the flowers of your own consciousness, the question of fearing death does not arise at all.

Again, I say to you, remember only one thing: you are an immortal being. Right now it is not your experience; you can accept it as a hypothesis – not as a belief, but a hypothesis to experiment with.

I never want anybody to accept anything from me as a belief, but only as a hypothesis. Because I know the truth of it, I need not enforce belief and faith on you. Knowing the truth I can say to you, "It is just for experiment, a temporary hypothesis," because I am absolutely certain that if you experiment, your hypothesis will change into your own knowing – not in a belief, not in a faith, but in a certainty. And only certainties can save you. Beliefs are boats made of paper.

One should not think that one can cross the ocean of existence on a boat made of paper. You need a certainty...not a belief, but a truth that is experienced by yourself. Not somebody else's truth, but your own. Then it is a joy to go into the unknown, unchartered ocean; it is a tremendous excitement and ecstasy.

The Golden Future,
April 27, 1987, evening

The Root of All Fears

Beloved Bhagwan,

What is fear?

THERE ARE FEARS and fears; I am not talking about them. I am talking about the most fundamental fear – all other fears are faraway echoes of the basic fear – and that fear is of death. Life is surrounded by death. You see everyday somebody dying, something dying; something that was alive a moment before is dead.

Each death reminds you of your own death.

It is impossible to forget your own death; every moment there is a reminder. So the first thing to be understood is that the only possibility of getting rid of fear is to get rid of death. And you *can* get rid of death, because death is only an idea, not a reality.

You have only seen other people dying; have you ever seen yourself dying? And when you see somebody else dying, you are an outsider, not a participant in the experience. The experience is happening inside the person.

All that you know is that he is no longer breathing, that his body has become cold, that his heart is no longer beating. But do you think all these things put together are equivalent to life? Is life only breathing? Is life only the heartbeat, the blood circulating and keeping the body warm? If this is life, it is not worth the game. If only my breathing is my life, what is the point of going on breathing?

Life must be something more. To be of any value life must have something of eternity in it; it must be something beyond death. And you can know it, because it exists within you. Life exists within you – death is only an experience of others, outside observers. It is simply like love. Can you understand love by seeing a person being loving to someone? What will you see? They are hugging each other, but is hugging love? You may see they are holding hands together, but is holding hands love? From the outside, what else can you discover about love? Anything that you discover will be absolutely futile. These are expressions of love, but not love itself. Love is something one knows only when one is in it.

One of the greatest poets of India, Rabindranath Tagore, was very much embarrassed by an old man who was his grandfather's friend. The old man often used to come because he lived in the neighborhood, and he would never leave the house without creating trouble for Rabindranath. He would certainly knock on his doors, and ask, "How is your poetry going? Do you really know God? Do you really know love? Tell me, do you know all these things that you talk about in your poetry? Or are you just articulate with words? Any idiot can talk about love, about God, about the soul, but I don't see in your eyes that you have experienced anything."

And Rabindranath could not answer him. In fact he was right. The old man would meet him in the marketplace and hold him and ask him, "What about your God? Have you found him, or are you still writing poetry about him? Remember, talking about God is not knowing God."

He was a very embarrassing person. In poets' gatherings, where Rabindranath was very much respected – he was a Nobel prize winner – that old man was bound to be there. On the stage before all the poets and worshipers of Rabindranath, he would hold him by his collar and would say, "Still it has not happened. Why are you deceiving these idiots? They are smaller idiots, you are a bigger idiot; they are not known outside the land, you are known all over the world – but that does not mean that you know God."

Rabindranath has written in his diary: "I was so much harassed by him, and he had such penetrating eyes that it was impossible to tell a lie to him. His very presence was such that either you had to say the truth or you had to remain silent."

But one day it happened...Rabindranath had gone for a morning walk. In the night it had rained; it was very early morning and the sun was rising. In the ocean it was all gold, and by the side of the street, water had gathered in small pools. In those small pools also the sun was rising with the same glory, with the same color, with the same joy.... And just this experience – that in existence there is nothing superior and nothing inferior, that all is one whole – suddenly triggered something in him. For the first time in his life he went to the old man's house, knocked on the door, looked into the eyes of the old man and said, "Now, what do you say?"

He said, "Now there is nothing to say. It has happened. I bless you."

The experience of your immortality, of your eternity, of your wholeness, of your oneness with existence is always possible. It only needs some triggering experience.

So the first thing is to get rid of death. All fears will disappear. You don't have to work on each single fear; otherwise it will take lives and still

you will not be able to get rid of them.

Fear is natural, because death is known by everybody around. Guilt is not natural; it is created by religions. They have made every man guilty – guilty of a thousand and one things, so burdened with guilt that they cannot sing, they cannot dance, they cannot enjoy anything. The guilt poisons everything.

All the religions have conspired against innocent human beings to make them guilty, because without making them guilty they cannot be made into slaves. And slaves are needed. For a few people's lust for power, millions of people are needed to be enslaved. For a few people to become Alexander the Great, millions have to be reduced to a sub-human status.

But all these are simply conditionings in the mind, which you can erase as easily as writing in the sand on a beach. Just don't be afraid because you have accepted those writings as holy, you have accepted them as coming from very respectable sources, from great founders of religions. It does not matter. Only one thing matters: that your mind should be completely cleaned, utterly empty and silent.

There is no need of Moses, or Jesus, or Buddha to reside inside you. You need a totally silent, clean space. And only that space can bring you not only to me, but to yourself, to existence itself.

The religions of the world have given so many diseases to man that they are uncountable. One of the diseases is that they have made every man ambitious for reward – if not in this world then in the other world.

They have made man so greedy, and at the same time they are all talking against greed. And their whole religion is based on greed....

Religions have done such harm that they cannot be forgiven. They have taken away all dignity of man – his joy of longing, of love, his pleasure in waiting, his trust that the spring will come. They have taken everything away from you. You will be rewarded only if you do certain rituals which have no relationship, no relevance.

A simple and innocent religion would have changed the whole earth. But the cunning priests would not allow a pure and innocent and childlike religion, with wondering eyes, with joy, not bothering about stupid ideas of heaven and hell, but living each moment with great love.

And waiting for more – not desiring, but by waiting, deserving, creating more and more space, silence, so that the spring comes. And not only a few flowers, but so many flowers....

One of the Sufi mystics has a small poem about it: "I had waited long for the spring – it came. And it came so abundantly, with so many flowers, that there was not a place left where I could make a nest for myself."

Life gives abundantly; you just have to be a recipient.

I want you to be absolutely innocent of all religious corruption and pollution. Have a silent, loving mind, waiting for more to happen. Life is so much that we go on exploring it but we cannot exhaust it. The mystery is timeless.

The Golden Future,
May 17, 1987, evening

An Easy Exploitation

RELIGION ONLY HAS any validity because of death. If there were no death, nobody would have bothered about religion at all. It is not life that inspires you to be religious, no – it is death. Death makes you search for something which will be alive in spite of death.

Just think of a world where death does not exist, where nobody dies. The question, "What happens after death?" will be meaningless, the question of heaven and hell will be meaningless. And when you are eternal, what God can be more than you? Now he is eternal life, and you are a momentary phenomenon, a soap bubble; within a moment you will be gone – hence the fear. And the fear creates the search. You want to know what this death is, and you want to know whether something remains after it or not. Those who say nothing remains after it are not religious. They don't go to any temple, they don't go to any church, they don't have any holy scripture.

All the religions up to now I call pseudo. They only appear to be religious, but they are not religious because they don't have courage enough to be whole, they are only a part.

The fear of death created the pseudo-religions. Now, for the first time, the world is coming close to a global death. Up to now it was only an individual death; the society continued, the world continued. Yes, people came and went away – old people disappearing, young children coming up – but the continuity was there, life was always there. Yes, individual life has been a problem, but only the individual was concerned about it.

The priest was capable of exploiting the individual very easily. He is so weak and so small, so limited, and he knows that he is going to die – he has to seek the priest's help to find something to cling to which is undying, eternal, which will take him beyond death. And the priest has been promising that. But it was never a problem that the whole society was confronted with.

The Rajneesh Bible, Volume III
January 20, 1985, evening

Life Should Not Be Mythed

UNLESS THE WEST changes the idea that there is only one life, this hypocrisy, this clinging, and this fear cannot be changed. In fact, one life is not all; you have lived many times, and you will live many times more. Hence, live each moment as totally as possible; there is no hurry to jump to another moment. Time is not money, time is inexhaustible; it is available to the poor as much as to the rich. The rich are not richer as far as time is concerned, and the poor are not poorer.

Life is an eternal incarnation.

What appears on the surface is very deep-rooted in the religions of the West. They are very miserly in giving you only seventy years. If you try to work it out, almost one-third of your life will be lost in sleep, one-third of your life will have to be wasted in earning food, clothes, housing. Whatever little is left has to be given to education, football matches, movies, stupid quarrels, fights. If you can save, in seventy years' time, seven minutes for yourself, I will count you a wise man.

But it is difficult to save even seven minutes in your whole life; so how can you find yourself? How can you know the mystery of your being, of your life? How can you understand that death is not an end?

Because you have missed experiencing life itself, you are going to miss the great experience of death, too; otherwise, there is nothing to be afraid of in death. It is a beautiful sleep, a dreamless sleep, a sleep that is needed for you to move into another body, silently and peacefully. It is a surgical phenomenon, it is almost like anesthesia. Death is a friend, not a foe. Once you understand death as a friend, and start living life without any fear that it is only a very small time span of seventy years – if your perspective opens to the eternity of your life – then everything will slow down; then there is no need to be speedy.

In everything, people are simply rushing. I have seen people taking their office bag, pushing things into it, kissing their wife – not seeing whether she is their wife or somebody else – and saying "goodbye" to their children. This is not the way of living! And where are you reaching with this speed?

The West has no tradition of mysticism. It is extrovert: look outward, there is so much to see. But they are not aware that inside there is not only the skeleton; there is something more within the skeleton. That is your consciousness. By closing your eyes you will not come across the skeleton; you will come across your very life source.

The West needs a deep acquaintance with its own life source – then there will be no hurry. One will enjoy when life brings youth, one will enjoy when life brings old age, and one will enjoy when life brings death. You simply know one thing – how to enjoy everything that you come across, how to transform it into a celebration.

I call the authentic religion the art of transforming everything into a celebration, into a song, into a dance.

The Golden Future,
May 19, 1987, evening

PART III

WATCH AND YOU WILL KNOW

PART III

WATCH AND YOU WILL KNOW

Why Cling? Simply Sing!

EVERY WORSHIPER IN every temple, in every synagogue, in every church, is humiliating himself and is humiliating the god within. The god within needs no other god to be worshiped. All that is needed is an awakening, awareness, a consciousness of one's own being.

The moment he becomes conscious of himself, he is no more a mortal, he becomes an immortal. He has always been an immortal, but because of his misunderstanding, he degraded himself into being a mortal, into someone who is going to die. Although the life within you and the consciousness within you is eternal and immortal, still you go on being afraid of death – because you see somebody dying every day, and everybody's death reminds you of your own death.

The poet sings, "Never ask for whom the bell tolls; the bell tolls for thee...."

He has some truth to convey to you. Every death is symbolic. It shows that you are standing in the same queue, and the queue is becoming shorter and shorter. Every day you are coming closer and closer to death. In fact the day you were born was not the day of your birth; it was the day you started dying. And since then, you have been dying every day. Every birthday, your death has come one year closer.

It is an absolutely certain fact that people die, animals die, trees die, birds die. How can you avoid the fact that you are also going to die – maybe tomorrow, maybe the day after tomorrow? It is only a question of time....

But still, those who are aware of their being know that nobody dies. Death is an illusion.

You have seen people die; have you ever seen yourself dying? And when you see somebody dying, are you really seeing somebody dying? All that you are seeing and all that your medical science can see, is that the man has stopped breathing, that his pulse has disappeared, that his heart beats no more, and they declare that he is dead.

Just a few days ago, a man in the part of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan, for the third time deceived his friends, his colleagues, his family. At the

age of one hundred and thirty-five, he died for the third time. People were very suspicious because two times before he had played the trick, he died. Diagnosed by the doctors as dead, certified as dead, he woke up, opened his eyes and started laughing. So when he died this time, people were very cautious. Doctors were very cautious, but there was every certainty of his death; there was no question.

They said, "Perhaps before he may have deceived you, but this time he is certainly dead. As far as medical science can know, he fulfills every requirement of a dead man." And the moment the certificate was signed by three doctors, the man opened his eyes, started laughing and said, "Listen, next time when I am going to die, I am going to *really* die. I just thought one time more...."

That part of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan has the longest living people in India and Pakistan. One hundred and twenty is very ordinary, normal. One hundred and fifty you can find; it is not so normal, but still there are hundreds of people who have passed one hundred and fifty. And there are a few rare cases who have reached one hundred and eighty years of age and they are still young; they are still working in their fields.

And this man has been questioned by newspapers, by journalists from all over the world, because he is a rare man; three times certified dead, and three times he has defied all medical knowledge, all medical science. And they asked, "What have you been doing? What happens?"

He said, "Nothing, because I am not my body, I know it; and I am not my breathing, I know it; and I am not my heart, I know it. I am beyond all these, I simply slip into the beyond. The heart stops, the pulse stops, and you are all befooled. Then I slip back again into the body, the blood starts running again, the pulse starts working again and the heart starts beating again."

He is a simple man, a farmer. He is not a yogi; he has never practiced anything. But just when he was a very young child, not more than seven or eight years old, he came in contact with a Sufi mystic who told him that death is an illusion. And he was so innocent that he accepted it.

The Sufi mystic said to him, "There is a very simple way to slip out of your body. Just watch it from inside; watch the body and suddenly there will come more and more distance between you and your body. Soon the body will be miles away. Watch the mind, and the same will happen with the mind.

"You simply remain a watcher and you will be able to slip out of the body, out of the mind, out of this whole personality. And it is within your control to come back. Because you have slipped out...you know the way you slipped out, so you know the way to come back in. And the way is: watching, you slipped out. Now stop watching. Become identified with

the body. Say, 'I am the body, I am the mind, I am the breathing, I am the heart beating.' Immediately the distance will disappear. You will come closer and soon you will slip back into the body."

Identifying yourself with the body, you become the body. Then you are a mortal. Then there is fear of death. Non-identifying with the body, you are just a watcher, you are just a pure consciousness, a no-mind. And there is no death, and there is no disease, and there is no old age. As far as your witnessing is concerned, it is eternal and it is always fresh and young and the same.

The authentic religion does not teach you to worship. The authentic religion teaches you to discover your immortality, to discover the god within you.

Everybody is going to pass through the gates of death someday. If you can remember that you are only pure consciousness – not the body, not the mind, not the heart, not your money, not your prestige, not your power, not your house, but just pure consciousness – then you can pass through the barrier of death unscratched. Then death cannot make even a dent in you.

A great king named Yayati became one hundred years old...he had lived tremendously well, enjoyed all that life could make available.

Death came and said to Yayati, "Get ready. It is time for you and I have come to take you."

Yayati saw Death, and though he was a great warrior and he had won many wars, he started trembling. He said, "But it is too early."

Death said, "Too early! You have been alive for one hundred years. Even your children have become old. Your eldest son is eighty years old. What more do you want?"

Yayati had one hundred sons because he had one hundred wives. He asked Death, "Can you do a favor for me? I know you have to take someone. If I can persuade one of my sons, can you leave me for one hundred years more and take one of my sons?"

Death said, "That is perfectly okay if somebody else is ready to go. But I don't think – if you are not ready, and you are the father and you have lived more and you have enjoyed everything, why should your son be ready?"

Yayati called his one hundred sons. The older ones remained silent. There was great silence, nobody was saying anything. Only one youngest son, who was only sixteen years of age, stood up and he said, "I am ready." Even Death felt sorry for the boy and said to the young man, "Perhaps you are too innocent. Can't you see your ninety-nine brothers are absolutely silent? Someone is eighty, someone is seventy-five, someone is seventy-eight, someone is seventy, someone is sixty – they have

lived, but they still want to live. And you have not lived at all. Even I feel sad to take you. You think again."

The boy said, "No, just seeing the situation makes me completely certain. Don't feel sad or sorry; I am going with absolute awareness. I can see that if my father is not satisfied in one hundred years, what is the point of being here? How can I be satisfied? I see my ninety-nine brothers, and nobody is satisfied. So why waste time? At least I can do this favor to my father. In his old age, let him enjoy one hundred years more. But I am finished. Seeing the situation that nobody is satisfied, I can understand one thing completely – that even if I live one hundred years, I will not be satisfied either. So it doesn't matter whether I go today or after ninety years. You just take me."

Death took the boy. And after one hundred years he came back, and Yayati was in the same position. He said, "These hundred years passed so soon. All my old sons have died, but I have another regiment. I can give you some son. Just have mercy on me."

It went on, the story goes on to say, for one thousand years. Ten times Death came, and nine times he took some son and Yayati lived one hundred years more. The tenth time Yayati said, "Although I am still as unsatisfied as I was when you came for the first time, now, although unwillingly, reluctantly, I will go, because I cannot go on asking for favors. It is too much. And one thing has become certain to me, that if one thousand years cannot help me to be contented, then even ten thousand will not do."

It is the attachment. You can go on living but as the idea of death strikes you, you will start trembling. And if you are not attached to anything, death can come this very moment and you will be in a very welcoming mood. You will be absolutely ready to go. In front of such a man, death is defeated. Death is defeated only by those who are ready to die any moment, without any reluctance. They become the immortals, they become the buddhas.

Freedom from attachment is freedom from death. Freedom from attachment is freedom from the wheel of birth and death. Freedom from attachment makes you capable of entering into the universal light and becoming one with it. And that is the greatest blessing, the ultimate ecstasy beyond which nothing else exists. You have come home.

Commentaries on the Teachings of the Messenger of Zen from India to China: Bodhidharma,
July 7, 1987, evening

Life Is Foreplay; Death Is Orgasmic

Beloved Bhagwan,

What happens to human consciousness
when the people of the world suddenly realize
they are in the midst of an unstoppable,
devastating plague that will kill
most of the people they know?

IT DEPENDS ON different people. For one who is absolutely conscious, nothing will happen; he will accept it, just as he has accepted everything else. There will be no struggles, no anxieties.

As he can accept his own death, he can accept the death of his planet too. And this acceptance is not in any way a kind of helplessness. On the contrary, just seeing the suchness of things – that everything is born, lives, and has to die.

This planet was not here five billion years ago; then it was born. Perhaps it has lived its whole life. And anyway, even if the human mind manages to pull through this crisis created by the politicians, the planet cannot live long because the sun is dying. In a few million years' time it will have exhausted all its energy, and once the sun dies, this planet cannot remain alive. Our whole life energy comes from the sun.

The man of perfect awareness will simply accept it as a natural phenomenon. Just now, leaves are falling from the trees; the other evening, the wind was blowing strong and the leaves were falling just like rain. But what can you do? This is the law of existence. Everything comes into form and disappears into formlessness. So for the man who is awakened, there will not be any change in his consciousness. For the unawakened man there will be different reactions.

I have heard – a man was dying; he was very old, had lived his life; there was no need to be worried about death. It was getting dark as the sun had set. The man opened his eyes and asked his wife, who was sitting by his right side, "Where is my eldest son?"

The wife said, "He is sitting just in front of me on the other side of the bed. Don't be worried about him; don't be worried about anything in this moment. Relax and pray."

But the man said, "And where is my second son?"

The wife said, "He is sitting by the side of your eldest son." And the old man, who was almost on the verge of death, started to get up.

The wife said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "I am looking for my third son."

And the wife and the sons all felt how much he loved them. The third son was sitting just near his feet.

He said, "I'm here, papa. You relax, we are all here."

He said, "You are all here and you want me to relax? Who is tending the shop?"

At the moment of death he is still concerned about the shop.

It is very difficult to predict how different people's unconscious minds will react. Their whole life will be reflected in their reaction, that much is certain. But everybody's life has moved through different paths, different experiences, and the culminating point is going to be different.

Death brings to the surface your essential personality.

Another old man was dying – he was a very rich man. His whole family was gathered there. The eldest son said, "What should we do when he dies? We will have to rent a car to take him to the graveyard."

The youngest son said, "He always longed for a Rolls Royce. In life he could not sit in one, but at the least, dead, he can enjoy a ride – a one-way ride of course – to the graveyard."

But the eldest son said, "You are too young, and you don't understand a thing. Dead people don't enjoy anything. It does not matter to the dead person whether it is a Rolls Royce, or just a Ford. A Ford will do."

The second son said, "Why are you being so extravagant? Anyway, a dead body only has to be carried. I know a person who has a truck – it will be more comfortable, and cheaper also."

The third son said, "I cannot tolerate all this nonsense. What is the need to be worried about Rolls Royces and Fords and trucks? Is he going to be married? He is going to die. We will just put him outside the house where we put all our garbage. The municipal truck will take him automatically, no expense at all."

At this moment the old man opened his eyes and said, "Where are my shoes?"

They said, "What are you going to do with your shoes? You just rest."

But he said, "I want my shoes."

The eldest son said, "He is a stubborn man. Perhaps he wants to die with his shoes on. Let him have his shoes."

And the old man, as he was putting on the shoes, said, "You need not be worried about expenses. I still have a little life left. I will walk down to the graveyard. See you there! I will die exactly by the grave. It hurts me that you are all so extravagant; even in my life I only dreamt about a Rolls Royce, or some other beautiful car. Dreaming is inexpensive, you can dream about anything."

And, it is said, the old man walked to the graveyard, his sons and his relatives following him, and he died exactly by the grave – to save money.

The last thought in a dying man is very characteristic of his whole life, his whole philosophy, his whole religion. It is a tremendous exposure.

One of the followers of J. Krishnamurti – an old man and very respected in India – used to come to me because his son was attorney general of Madhya Pradesh, and the MP court is in Jabalpur. He used to come to visit his son, and whenever he was there he made it a point to see me if I was in town. The old man had been Krishnamurti's follower for almost fifty years. He had dropped all rituals, all scriptures; he was absolutely convinced logically, intellectually, that Krishnamurti was right. I used to say to him, "You should remember: intellectual conviction, logical or rational conviction, is very superficial. In times of crisis it disappears, evaporates."

But he used to say to me, "Fifty years – it cannot remain superficial."

One day his son came to me and said, "My father is dying and I could not think of anybody else whom he would like to have near him – he loves you so much. So you just come with me; I have brought the car, there is not much time."

So I simply went with him. As I entered through the door of his father's room, very silently his lips were moving. So I went in, also very silently, because I wanted to hear what he was repeating. He was saying, "Ram, Ram, Ram," the Hindu name of God. And for fifty years he had been saying there was no God.

I shook him. He opened his eyes, and he said, "Don't disturb me. This is no time for argumentation."

I said, "I am not going to argue, but just to ask: what happened to those fifty years? From where does this repetition of the name of God come? You insisted that there is no God."

He said, "That was okay at that time, but now that I am dying – and the doctors have said I cannot survive more than half an hour – just don't disturb me. Let me repeat the name of God. Anyway, who knows? He may be. If there is no God, there is no harm in repeating his name. But if there *is* a God, and you don't die repeating his name, then you are on the blacklist. And I don't want to go to hell, I have suffered enough here on the earth."

I said, "That's what I was saying to you, that intellectual conviction is of no use."

He did not die; he survived. After three or four days I went to see him. He was sitting in the garden, and I said, "What about that evening?"

He said, "Forget all about it. It was just a time of weakness, a fear of death that made me start repeating the name of God. Otherwise there is no God."

I said, "It means that you need another experience of dying? This was your first heart attack; you survived – the second will be coming soon. At the most you can survive the second, but the third you will not be able to survive. And remember what you are saying to me."

He said, "Forget all that. I am absolutely certain there is no God."

I said, "Just let death start approaching near you, and immediately your superficial, intellectual convictions will disappear. This idea that there is no God is not your own, it is borrowed. It is not your own exploration; it is not your own insight; it is not part of your consciousness but only part of your mind."

People will behave differently.

You are asking, "What happens to human consciousness when the people of the world suddenly realize they are in the midst of an unstoppable, devastating plague that will kill most of the people they know?"

A few points can be certainly asserted. One, when the whole world is dying, all your relationships – your mother, your father, your girlfriend, your wife, your husband, your boyfriend, your children – do not mean anything. When the whole world is on the point of disappearing into death, into a black hole, the relationships that you have created in life cannot remain intact. In fact, behind our relationships we are strangers.

It makes one feel afraid, so one never looks into it. Otherwise, even when you are in the crowd, you are alone; even if your name is known to people, does that make any difference? You are still a stranger. And this can be seen – a husband and wife may have lived thirty years, forty years, fifty years together, but the more they live together, the more they become aware that they are strangers.

Before they got married they had the hallucination that perhaps they were made for each other, but as the honeymoon ends, that illusion disappears. And every day they start becoming distant and more distant – pretending that everything is all right, everything is fine. But deep down they know that their strangeness is untouched.

This whole world is full of strangers. And if it were going to disappear the next moment, if it were announced on all the radios and all the televisions, suddenly you would see yourself in your utter nudity – alone.

A small child had gone to the zoo with his father, and they were watch-

ing a very ferocious lion in his cage – he was walking up and down. The boy became very much afraid; he was not more than nine. He asked his father, "Dad, if this lion gets out and something happens to you, please just tell me what number bus I have to take to reach home?"

In such a situation he is asking a very relevant question. He cannot conceive that if something happens to his father, something will also happen to him; but in case something happens to his father and he is alive, he needs to know the number of the bus. The father was shocked that he was not concerned about him at all. Whatever happens to him happens – his concern is to know the number of the bus.

The very climate of death suddenly takes away all your masks, suddenly makes you aware that you are alone, and all your relationships were deceptions, ways to forget your aloneness – somehow to create a family in which you feel you are not alone.

But death exposes without fail. And this is only about small deaths; if the whole world is going to die, all your relationships will disappear before it. You will die alone, a stranger who has no name, no fame, no respectability, no power – utterly helpless. But in this helplessness people will still behave differently.

An old man is about to have a date with a young woman, so he goes to the doctor, who prescribes him an aphrodisiac that will increase and prolong his libido. He takes his date to one of the best restaurants in town. When they have ordered their soup, he sends his date to powder her nose and then takes the waiter aside. "Put these pills into my soup," he confides in him, "just before you bring it out from the kitchen." The young lady comes back, but when, after fifteen minutes, the soup has not been served, the old man calls the waiter over. "Where is our soup?" he demands.

"It will be here in a few minutes," replies the waiter, "just as soon as the noodles lie down again."

At the time of death, the most important subject in the minds of people who are not conscious is going to be sex – because sex and death are two sides of the same coin.

When the whole world is dying, most of the unconscious people who have been repressing their sexuality will think only of sex. They cannot think of anything else; all their interests and hobbies and religions will disappear – the world is dying, perhaps they can make love one more time, before death destroys everything. They have been repressing their whole life's libido, the sexual urge – according to the priests, according to the society and the culture – and now it does not matter. Everything is going to disappear; they don't need any respectability, they don't care about religion.

But it will all depend on different individuals, how they have lived. If they have lived an uninhibited, natural life, each moment given its total share, then perhaps they will simply watch it – it is going to be the greatest tragedy, the greatest drama in the world. They will not do anything but sit silently and watch. But no general law can be established as to what people will do.

Only about the enlightened people can it be said with absolute guarantee that there will be no difference at all. They know that such is the nature of things. This is the whole approach of Gautam Buddha – the philosophy of suchness – that there is a time when the fall comes, and the leaves have to leave the tree.

When the spring comes there are flowers, and in the East particularly – the West has no idea about it – in the East it is not one creation, but every creation that goes into a de-creation, just as every man, after the whole day's work, goes to sleep in the night. This is a very potent idea. Each creation, after a time – they have even talked about the exact time, how long one creation lasts – goes into de-creation. It also needs a rest. So for the enlightened person it is not anything unusual; it is part of existence itself. As the day has ended, the night will end also – and again the creation wakes up.

Modern physics is coming closer to the idea. First they discovered black holes: that in space there are strange black holes and if any planet or any sun comes close to the black holes it is pulled in and simply disappears. But science understands the balance in nature, so now they are saying that there must be white holes. Perhaps the black hole is one side of the door, and the white hole is the other side of the door. From one side a planet or a star goes into the black hole and disappears from us, and from the other side, the white hole, a new star is born.

Every day new stars are born and old stars are dying; life and death make a continuous circle. If life is the day, death is the night – it is not against it; it is just rest, sleep, a time to be rejuvenated.

The man of understanding will not be disturbed by it. But the unconscious people will simply freak out, and they will start doing things they have never done. They have been controlling themselves and now there is no point in controlling, there is no need.

If it is known beforehand – which is not very possible, because with nuclear weapons it will take only ten minutes for the earth to disappear, so there is not much possibility that you will be informed in advance: "Get ready!" Just the shock of hearing on your radios or on your television sets that within ten minutes the world is going to collapse, and you may get simply frozen, paralyzed, the shock will be so big and so unfamiliar.

Perhaps most of the people will die from shock, not from nuclear

weapons. Just hearing that within ten minutes the whole world is going to die will be enough – the shock will destroy their fragile existence. So to say how people will behave is going to be only hypothetical.

Only about the enlightened ones I can say with absolute guarantee, on my own authority, that there will be no difference. If they are drinking tea, they will continue to drink tea; their hands will not even shake. If they are taking a shower, they will continue to take a shower. They will not be in shock; neither will they be paralyzed, nor will they freak out. Nor will they indulge in things which they have been repressing, because an enlightened man has no repressions in his being; he knows always only one word to say to nature – "Yes."

They will say "yes" to the disappearing earth, to the ultimate death – they don't know the word "no." There is not going to be any resistance on their part; and they will be the only ones who will die consciously. And the one who dies consciously enters into the eternal flow of life; he does not die.

Those who die unconsciously will be born on some other planet, in some other womb – because life cannot be destroyed, even by nuclear weapons. It can destroy only the houses in which life exists.

The Hidden Splendor,
March 18, 1987, morning

PART IV

JOURNEYING TO THE CENTER OF YOUR BEING

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JOURNEYING TO THE CENTER OF YOUR BEING

Meditation: The Way Beyond

Beloved Bhagwan,
I feel a strong connection between death
and meditation – a fascination and a fear.
When I sit with You, it is somehow safe
to close my eyes and meditate; when I am alone,
it is frightening. Please comment.

THERE IS NOT only a strong connection between meditation and death, but they are almost the same thing – just two ways of looking at the same experience. Death separates you from your body, from your mind, from all that is not you. But it separates you against your will. You are resisting, you don't want to be separated; you are not willing, you are not in a state of let-go.

Meditation also separates all that is not you from your being and reality – but the resistance is not there; that is the only difference. Instead of resistance, there is a tremendous willingness, a longing, a passionate welcome. You want it; you desire it from the very depths of your heart.

The experience is the same – the separation between the false and the real – but because of your resistance in death, you become unconscious, you fall into a coma. You cling too much in death; you don't allow it to happen, you close all the doors, all the windows. Your lust for life is at the optimum. The very idea of dying frightens you from the very roots.

But death is a natural phenomenon, and absolutely necessary, too – it has to happen. If the leaves don't become yellow and don't fall, the new leaves, the fresh and young, will not come. If one goes on living in the old body, he will not be moving into a better house, fresher, newer, with more possibilities of a new beginning. Perhaps he may not take the same route as he took in his past life, getting lost in a desert. He may move into a new sky of consciousness.

Each death is an end and a beginning.

Don't pay too much attention to the end. It is an end to an old, rotten, miserable lifestyle, and it is a great opportunity to begin a new life, not to commit the old mistakes. It is a beginning of an adventure. But because

you cling to life and you don't want to leave it – and it has to happen by the very nature of things – you fall unconscious.

Almost everyone, except those few people who have become enlightened, dies unconsciously; hence, they don't know what death is, they don't know its new beginning, the new dawn.

Meditation is your own exploration.

You are searching to know exactly what constitutes you: what is false in you and what is real in you. It is a tremendous journey from the false to the real, from the mortal to the immortal, from darkness to light. But when you come to the point of seeing the separation from the mind and the body, and yourself just as a witness, the experience of death is the same. You are not dying...a man who has meditated will die joyfully because he knows there is no death; the death was in his clinging with life.

You say, "I feel a strong connection between death and meditation...." There is. In the ancient scriptures of this land, even the master is defined as death because his whole function, his whole work is to teach you meditation. In other words, he is teaching you to die without dying – to pass through the experience of death, surprised that you are still alive; death was like a cloud that has passed, it has not even scratched you. Hence, the fascination, and the fear. The fascination is to know the mysterious experience everybody has to pass through, has passed through many times, but has become unconscious. And the fear – that perhaps death is only the end and not another beginning.

It happened, just in the beginning of this century, that the King of Varanasi was to be operated on. The operation was major, but the king was very stubborn and he wouldn't take any kind of anesthesia. He said, "You can do the operation, but I want to see it happen; I don't want to be unconscious."

The doctors were puzzled. It is against medical practice – such a major operation was going to be too painful; the man might die because of the pain. Surgery needs you to be unconscious.

Perhaps the science of surgery has learned the art of anesthesia from the experience of death, because death is the greatest surgery. It separates you from your body, from your mind, and from your heart, and you have been identified with all this for seventy years, eighty years. They have become almost your real self. The separation is going to be very painful, and there is a limit to pain.

Have you ever noticed? – there is no unbearable pain. The words "unbearable pain" exist only in language – all pain is bearable. The moment it becomes unbearable, you fall unconscious. Your consciousness is a way to bear it.

If he had been an ordinary man, the doctors would not have listened to

him – but he was a king and a very well-known king, known all over the country as a great wise man. He persuaded the surgeons, "Don't be worried, nothing is going to happen to me. Just give me five minutes before you start your operation so that I can arrange myself in a meditative state. Once I'm in meditation, I am already far away from the body. Then you can cut my whole body into pieces – I will be only a witness, and a faraway witness, as if it is happening to somebody else."

The moment was very critical; the operation had to be done immediately. If it were not done immediately, it might cause death. There were only two alternatives: either to operate, and allow the patient to remain conscious, or not to operate, but follow the old routine of science. But in that case, death was certain. In the first case, there was a chance that perhaps this man could manage, and he was so insistent. Finding no way to persuade him, they had to operate.

That was the first operation done without anesthesia, in a state of meditation. The king simply closed his eyes, became silent. Even the surgeons felt something changing around the king – the vibe, the presence; his face became relaxed like a small baby, just born, and after five minutes they started the operation. The operation took two hours, and they were trembling with fear; in fact, they were not sure that the king would survive – the shock might be too much. But when the operation was over, the king asked them, "Can I open my eyes now?"

It was discussed in the medical field all over the world as a very strange case. The surgeons asked him what he did.

He said, "I have not done anything. To meditate is my very life. Moment to moment I am living in silence. I asked for those five minutes because you were going to do such a dangerous operation that I had to become absolutely settled in my being, with no wavering. Then you could do anything because you are not doing it to me. I am consciousness – and you cannot operate on consciousness, you can operate only on the body."

You say, "When I sit with You, it is somehow safe." There is really no difference whether you sit with me or you sit alone – it is just a mind security, the idea that the master is present so there is no harm to take the jump. If something goes wrong, somebody is there to take care of it.

In meditation, nothing goes wrong – ever.

Without meditation, everything is going wrong.

Nothing goes right without meditation; your whole life is going wrong. You live only in hope, but your hopes are never fulfilled. Your life is a long, long tragedy. And the reason is your unawareness, your unmeditativeness.

Meditation looks like death, and the experience is exactly the same. But the attitude and the approach are different, and the difference is so

vast that it can be said that meditation is life and death is just a dream.

But this is the function of a mystery school, where many people are meditating, where a master is present. You feel safe, you are not alone. If something goes wrong, help will be available immediately. But nothing goes wrong.

So meditate while you are sitting with me, and meditate in your aloneness. Meditation is the only thing with an absolute guarantee that nothing goes wrong with it. It only reveals your existence to yourself – how can anything go wrong? And you are not doing anything; you are really stopping doing everything. You are stopping thinking, feeling, doing – a full stop to all your actions. Only consciousness remains, because that is not your action, it is you.

Once you have tasted your being, all fear disappears, and life becomes a totally new dimension – no longer mundane, no longer ordinary. For the first time you see the sacredness and the divineness not only of yourself, but of all that exists. Everything becomes mysterious, and to live in this mystery is the only way to live blissfully; to live in this mystery is to live under blessings showering on you like rain. Each moment brings more and more, deeper and more profound blessings to you – not that you deserve them, but because life gives them out of its abundance; it is burdened, it shares with whomsoever is receptive to it.

But don't get the idea that meditation is death-like, because death has no good associations in your mind. That will prevent you from experiencing consciousness – "It is death-like." In fact, it is a *real* death. The ordinary death is not a real death, because you will be again joined with another structure, another body. The meditator dies in a great way; he never again becomes imprisoned in a body.

An Italian missed a day at work and the foreman wanted an explanation.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"It was-a my wife. She give-a birth to a wheelbarrow."

"If you can't do any better than that," said the foreman, "I'm gonna have to fire you."

"I think-a I got it wrong," said the Italian. "My wife, she's in-a bed having a push chair."

"That's it, wise guy," shouted the foreman, "you are fired!"

The Italian went home and asked his wife, "Hey, what was wrong with you yesterday?"

"I told-a you, I had-a a miscarriage."

"I knew it was-a something with-a wheels-a on it."

There are misunderstandings piled upon misunderstandings in you. Some misunderstandings can be tremendously harmful. Getting medita-

tion and death identified in your mind is one of the greatest harms that you can do to yourself. Although you are not wrong, your associations with the meaning of death are such that they will prevent you from getting into meditation.

That is one of the reasons I want to make death more and more associated with celebration rather than with mourning, more and more associated with a change, a new beginning rather than just a full stop, an end. I want to change the association. That will clear the way for meditativeness.

And if you are feeling, here with me, silent and meditative – still alive, more alive than ever – then there is no need to be afraid. Try it in different situations, and you will always find it a source of great healing, a source of great well-being, a source of great wisdom, a source of great insight into life and its mysteries.

The Golden Future,
May 18, 1987, morning

Know Death Without Dying

Beloved Bhagwan,
Why has the fear of death been
a constant companion throughout my life
and what is its significance for me?

MEDITATION AND DEATH are very similar experiences. In death your ego disappears; only your pure being remains. The same happens in meditation too: the disappearance of the ego and the presence only of pure *is-ness*, of your being. The similarity is so deep that just as people are afraid of death, they are also afraid of meditation. On the other hand, if you are not afraid of meditation, you will not be afraid of death either.

Meditation prepares you for death.

Our whole education is only for life. That is only half an education, and the other half – which is far more important, which comes as the crescendo of life – is completely missing from all systems of education that have existed before or are now in existence.

Meditation prepares you for the other half; it helps you to know death without dying. And once you have known death without dying, the fear of death will disappear forever. Even when death comes, you will be silently watching it, knowing absolutely that it cannot even make a small scratch on your being. It is going to take away your body, your mind, but not you.

You belong to the immortal life.

The Hidden Splendor,
March 23, 1987, evening

The Center of the Cyclone

MEDITATION IS THE whole science of bringing more and more consciousness out of darkness. The only way is to be as conscious as possible twenty-four hours a day. Sitting, sit consciously, not like a mechanical robot; walking, walk consciously, alert to each movement; listening, listen more and more consciously, so that each word comes to you in its crystal clear purity, its definitiveness. While listening, be silent, so that your consciousness is not covered by thoughts.

Just this moment, if you are silent and conscious you can hear small insects singing their songs in the trees. The darkness is not empty, the night has its own song but if you are full of thoughts, then you cannot listen to the insects. This is just an example.

If you become more and more silent, you may start listening to your own heartbeat, you may start listening to the flow of your own blood, because blood is continuously flowing all through your body. If you are conscious and silent, more and more clarity, creativity, intelligence, will be discovered.

One of the great philosophers of the West, C.E.M. Joad, was dying, and a friend, who was a disciple of George Gurdjieff, had come to see him. Joad asked the friend, "What do you go on doing with this strange fellow, George Gurdjieff? Why are you wasting your time? And not only you, I have heard that many people are wasting their time."

The friend laughed. He said, "It is strange that those few people who are with Gurdjieff think that the whole world is wasting its time, and you are thinking that we are wasting our time."

Joad said, "I don't have much time to live; otherwise I would have come and compared."

The friend said, "Even if you have only a few seconds more to live, it can be done here, now." Joad agreed.

The man said, "You close your eyes and just look inside, and then open your eyes and tell me what you find."

Joad closed his eyes, opened his eyes and said, "There is darkness and nothing else."

The friend laughed and he said, "It is not a time to laugh, because you are almost dying, but I have come at the right time. You said that you saw only darkness inside?"

Joad said, "Of course."

And the man said, "You are such a great philosopher; you have written such beautiful books. Can't you see the point, that there are two things – you and the darkness? Otherwise, who saw the darkness? Darkness cannot see itself – that much is certain – and darkness cannot report that there is only darkness."

Joad gave it consideration and he said, "My God, perhaps the people who are with Gurdjieff are not wasting their time. This is true, *I* have seen the darkness."

The friend said, "Our whole effort is to make this 'I', the witness, stronger and more crystallized, and to change the darkness into light. Both things happen simultaneously. As the witness becomes more and more centered, the darkness becomes less and less. When the witness comes to its full flowering, that is the lotus of consciousness, all darkness disappears."

To be in darkness is to be living at the minimum. And to be full of light is to live at the maximum.

The Razor's Edge,
March 2, 1987, evening

An Ancient Golden Key

THERE ARE HUNDREDS of methods of meditation, but perhaps vipassana has a unique status, just the same way as there have been thousands of mystics, but Gautam Buddha has a uniqueness of his own. In many ways he is incomparable, in many ways he has done more for humanity than anybody else. In many ways his search for truth was more sincere, more authentic than anybody else's.

This is the meditation through which Gautam Buddha became enlightened. The very word, "vipassana," in Pali, the language in which Gautam Buddha spoke... The meaning – the literal meaning – of the word is to look, and the metaphorical meaning is to watch, to witness.

Gautam Buddha has chosen a meditation which can be called the essential meditation. All other meditations are different forms of witnessing, but witnessing is present in every kind of meditation as an essential part; it cannot be avoided. Buddha has deleted everything else and kept only the essential part – to witness.

There are three steps of witnessing. Buddha is a very scientific thinker. He begins with the body, because that is the easiest to witness. It is easy to witness my hand moving, my hand being raised. I can witness myself walking on the road, I can witness each step as I walk. I can witness when I am eating my food. So the first step in vipassana is witnessing the actions of the body, which is the simplest step. Any scientific method will always begin from the simplest.

While witnessing the body, you will be amazed with new experiences. When you move your hand with witnessing, watchfulness, alertness, consciousness, you will feel a certain grace and a certain silence in the hand. You can do the movement without witnessing – it will be quicker, but it will lose the grace.

Buddha used to walk so slowly that many times he was asked why he was walking so slowly. He said, "This is part of my meditation: always to walk as if you are walking in winter into a cold stream...slowly, alert – because the stream is very cold; aware because the current is very strong; witnessing each of your steps because you can slip on the stones in the stream."

The method remains the same, only the object changes with each step. The second step is watching the mind. Now you move into a more subtle world: watch your thoughts. If you have been able and successful in watching your body, there is not going to be any difficulty.

Thoughts are subtle waves, electronic waves, radio waves, but they are as material as your body. They are not visible, just as the air is not visible, but the air is as material as the stones; so are your thoughts – material but invisible.

That is the second step, the middle step. You are moving towards invisibility, but still it is material – watch your thoughts. The only condition is: don't judge. Don't judge, because the moment you start judging you will forget watching.

There is no antagonism against judging. The reason why it is prohibited is that the moment you start judging – "This is a good thought" for that much space, you were not witnessing. You started thinking, you became involved. You could not remain aloof, standing by the side of the road and just seeing the traffic.

Don't become a participant, either by appraising, valuing, condemning; no attitude should be taken about what is passing in your mind.

You should watch your thoughts as if clouds are passing in the sky. You don't make judgments about them – this black cloud is very evil, this white cloud looks like a sage. Clouds are clouds, they are neither evil nor good. So are thoughts – just a small wave length passing through your mind.

Watch without any judgment and you are again in for a greater surprise. As your watching becomes settled, thoughts will come less and less. The proportion is exactly the same: if you are fifty percent in your witnessing, then fifty percent of your thoughts will disappear. If you are sixty percent in your witnessing, then only forty percent of thoughts will be there. When you are ninety-nine percent a pure witness, only once in a while will there be a lonely thought, one percent, passing on the road; otherwise the traffic is gone. That rush hour traffic is no longer there.

When you are one hundred percent non-judgmental, just a witness, it means that you have become just a mirror, because a mirror never makes any judgments. An ugly woman looks into it – the mirror has no judgment. A beautiful woman looks into it – to the mirror, it makes no difference. Nobody looks into it – the mirror is as pure as when somebody is being reflected in it. Neither reflection stirs it, nor no reflection. Witnessing becomes a mirror.

This is a great achievement in meditation. You have moved halfway, and this was the hardest part. Now you know the secret, and the same secret has just to be applied to different objects. From thoughts you have to move to more subtle experiences – emotions, feelings, moods; from the

mind to the heart, with the same condition: no judgment, just witnessing. And the surprise will be that most of the emotions, feelings and moods which possess you....

When you are feeling sad, you are possessed by sadness. When you are feeling angry, it is not something partial. You become full of anger; every fiber of your being is throbbing with anger.

Watching the heart, the experience will be that now nothing possesses you. Sadness comes and goes, you don't become sad. Happiness comes and goes, you don't become happy either. Whatever moves in the deep layers of your heart does not affect you at all. For the first time you taste something of mastery. You are no longer a slave to be pushed and pulled this way and that way, where any emotion and feeling, anybody can disturb you for any trivia.

When you become a witness of the third step, you will become for the first time a master: nothing disturbs you, nothing overpowers you; everything remains far away, deep below, and you are on a hilltop.

These are the three steps of vipassana; these three steps take you to the door of the temple, which is open.

When you have become perfectly watchful of your body, mind and heart, then you cannot do anything more, then you have to wait.

When perfection is complete on these three steps, the fourth step happens on its own accord as a reward. It is a quantum leap from the heart to the being, to the very center of your existence. You cannot do it; it happens – you have to remember that.

Don't try to do it, because if you try to do it, your failure is absolutely certain. It is a happening. You prepare three steps, the fourth step is a reward from existence itself; it is a quantum leap. Suddenly your life force, your witnessing, enters the very center of your being. You have come home.

You can call it self-realization, you can call it enlightenment, you can call it ultimate liberation, but there is nothing more than that. You have come to the very end of your search; and you have found the very truth of existence and the great ecstasy that it brings as a shadow by and around itself.

Meditation is not work.

Meditation is purest blissfulness.

As you go deeper, you come across more and more beautiful spaces, more and more luminous spots. They are your treasure – deeper and deeper silences, which are not only the absence of noise, but the presence of a soundless song – musical, alive and dancing.

As you reach to the ultimate point of your being, the center of the cyclone, you have found God; not as a person, but as light, as consciousness,

as truth, as beauty – as all that man has been dreaming of for centuries. And these dreamt-of treasures are hidden within himself.

It is not a troublesome, torturous, ascetic practice; it is very pleasant, musical, poetic, and it goes on becoming more and more of a sheer joy. It is not work, it is prayer – the only prayer I know of.

To me prayer means when you have achieved your being, you feel a tremendous gratitude towards existence. That gratitude is the only real authentic prayer; all other prayers are fake, pseudo, manufactured. This gratitude will arise within you just like a fragrance, arising out of roses.

A Jewish swami takes a gorgeous ma out to dinner. They go to the most expensive restaurant in Poona and feast on Italian spaghetti, Japanese sushi and French wine. For dessert they choose German chocolate cake and finish with Brazilian coffee. When the waiter brings them the bill, Goldstein finds he has left his wallet at home. So he takes out his picture of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and hands it to the waiter.

"What is this?" demands the waiter.

"My mastercard," replies Goldstein.

Meditation is your mastercard!

The Rebel,
June 9, 1987, morning

Impeccable Awareness Brings Great Joy

Beloved Bhagwan,
A few months ago my friend and I were visiting his dying father. Lots of people were around. His body was about finished. To most people he was indifferent, but when everyone left he suddenly opened his eyes and told us, "I feel like I have two bodies; one body is sick and the other is completely healthy." We told him, "That's right! The healthy body is the real you, so stay with that one." He said, "Okay," and closed his eyes. As we sat with him, the sick energy around the hospital bed changed. We couldn't believe this new energy; it was as if we were in darshan with You. Such beautiful silence. I felt a bit strange saying these words to someone who was really experiencing this. Whatever I said wasn't really my experience, just something I'd thought about. After we left he improved for a while, went home and died peacefully in his bed. Beloved Bhagwan, even though I've been with You for ten years, I felt so ignorant in front of this man who was ready to let go of everything with such trust and clarity and peace.

THE EXPERIENCE THAT you went through always is possible when someone is dying. All that is required is a little alertness. The man who was dying was aware – not much awareness is needed for this experience.

At the moment of death your physical body and your spiritual body start separating. Ordinarily, they are so much involved with each other that you don't feel their separation. But at the moment of death, just before death happens, the two bodies start getting unidentified with each other. Now their ways are going to be different; the physical body is going to the physi-

cal body is going to the physical elements, and the spiritual body is on its pilgrimage onwards, to a new birth, in a new form, in a new womb.

If the person is a little alert he can see it himself, and because you said to him that the healthier body is you, and the body that is sick and dying is not you... In those moments, to trust is very easy because it is happening exactly before the eyes of the person himself. He cannot identify with the body, that is falling apart, and he can immediately recognize the fact that he is the healthier one, the deeper one.

But you could have helped the man even a little more. This was good, but not good enough. Even this experience of the man, of getting disidentified with the physical body, immediately changed the energy in the room. It became silent, peaceful. But if you had learned the art of how to help a dying man, you would not have stopped where you stopped. A second thing was absolutely necessary to tell him, because he was in a trusting state – everybody is, at the moment of death.

It is life which creates problems and doubts and postponements, but death has no time to postpone. The man cannot say, "I will try to see," or "I will see tomorrow." He has to do it right now, this very moment, because even the next moment is not certain. Most probably he is not going to survive. And what is he going to lose by trusting? Death is going to take away everything anyway. So the fear of trust is not there; time to think about it is not there. And a clarity is there that the physical body is getting farther and farther away.

It was a good step to tell him, "You are the healthier body." The second step would have been to tell him, "You are the witness of both bodies; the body that is dying is physical, and the body that you are feeling as healthy is psychological. But who are *you*? You can see both bodies. Certainly you must be the third; you cannot be one of these two."

This is the whole process of the *Bardo*. Only in Tibet have they developed the art of dying. While the whole world has been trying to develop the art of living, Tibet is the only country in the world which has developed the whole science and art of dying. They call it the *Bardo*.

If you had told the person, "This is good that you have taken one step, you are out of the physical body; but now you have got identified with the psychological body. You are not even that; you are only awareness, a pure consciousness, a perceptivity." If you could have helped the person to understand that he is neither this body nor that body, but something bodiless, formless, a pure consciousness, then his death would have been a totally different phenomenon.

You saw the change of energy; you would have seen another change of energy. You saw silence descending; you would have seen music also, a certain dancing energy also, a certain fragrance filling the whole space.

And the man's face would have shown a new phenomenon – the aura of light.

If he had taken the second step also, then his death would have been the last death. In the *Bardo* they call it "the great death," because now he will not be born into another form, into another imprisonment; now he will remain in the eternal, in the oceanic consciousness that fills the whole universe.

So remember it – it may happen to many of you. You may be with a friend or with a relative, your mother, your father. While they are dying, help them to realize two things: first, they are not the physical body – which is very simple for a dying man to recognize. Second – which is a little difficult, but if the man is able to recognize the first, there is a possibility of the second recognition too – that you are not even the second body; you are beyond both bodies. You are pure freedom and pure consciousness.

If he had taken the second step, then you would have seen a miracle happening around him – something, not just silence, but something more alive, something belonging to eternity, to immortality. And all of you who were present there would have been overwhelmed with gratitude that this death has not been a time of mourning, but it has become a moment of celebration.

If you can transform a death into a moment of celebration, you have helped your friend, your mother, your father, your brother, your wife, your husband. You have given them the greatest gift that is possible in existence. And close to death it is very easy. The child is not even worried about life or death; he has no concern. The young man is too much involved in biological games, in ambitions, in becoming richer, in becoming powerful, in having more prestige; he has no time to think of eternal questions.

But at the moment of death, just before death is going to happen, you don't have any ambition. And whether you are rich or poor makes no difference; whether you are a criminal or a saint makes no difference. Death takes you beyond all discriminations of life and beyond all stupid games of life.

But rather than helping people, people destroy that beautiful moment. It is the most precious in man's whole life. Even if he has lived one hundred years, this is the most precious moment. But people start crying and weeping and showing their sympathy, saying, "This is very untimely, it should not happen." Or they start consoling the person, saying, "Don't be worried, the doctors are saying that you will be saved."

These are all foolishnesses. Even the doctors play a part in these stupid things. They don't tell that your death has come. They avoid the subject; they go on giving you hope. They say, "Don't be worried, you will be

saved," knowing perfectly well that the man is going to die. They are giving him a false consolation, not knowing that this is the moment when he should be made fully aware of death – so acutely and so impeccably aware, that pure consciousness is experienced. That moment has become a moment of great victory. Now there is no death for him, but only eternal life.

The Razor's Edge,
February 26, 1987, evening

The Tibetan Bardo

DEATH IS NOT the end but only the culmination of one's whole life, a climax. It is not that you are finished but you are transported to another body. That is what the Easterners call "the wheel." It goes on turning and turning. Yes, it can be stopped, but the way to stop it is not when you are dying.

That is one of the lessons, the greatest lesson I learned from my grandfather's death. He was crying, with tears in his eyes, and asking us to stop the wheel. We were at a loss what to do: how to stop the wheel?

His wheel was his wheel; it was not even visible to us. It was his own consciousness, and only he could do it. Since he was asking us to stop it, it was obvious that he could not do it himself, hence the tears and his constant insistence in asking us again and again, as if we were deaf. We told him, "We have heard you, Nana, and we understand. Please be silent."

In that moment something great happened. I have never revealed it to anybody; perhaps before this moment was not the time. I was saying to him, "Please be silent" – the bullock cart was rattling on the rough, ugly road. It was not even a road, just a track, and he was insisting, "Stop the wheel, Rajah, do you hear? Stop the wheel."

Again and again I told him, "Yes, I do hear you. I understand what you mean. You know that nobody except you can stop the wheel, so please be silent. I will try to help you."

My grandmother was amazed. She looked at me with such big, amazing eyes: what was I saying? How could I help?

I said, "Yes. Don't look so amazed. I have suddenly remembered one of my past lives. Seeing his death I have remembered one of my own deaths." That life and death happened in Tibet. That is the only country which knows, very scientifically, how to stop the wheel. Then I started chanting something.

Neither my grandmother could understand, nor my dying grandfather, nor my servant Bhoora, who was listening intently from the outside. And what is more, neither could I understand a single word of what I was chanting. It was only after twelve or thirteen years that I came to under-

stand what it was. It took that much time to discover it. It was *Bardo Thodal,* a Tibetan ritual.

When a man dies in Tibet, they repeat a certain mantra. That mantra is called *Bardo*. The mantra says to him, "Relax, be silent. Go to your center, just be there; don't leave it whatsoever happens to the body. Just be a witness. Let it happen, don't interfere. Remember, remember, remember that you are only a witness; that is your true nature. If you can die remembering, the wheel is stopped."

I repeated the *Bardo Thodal* for my dying grandfather without even knowing what I was doing. It was strange – not only that I repeated it, but also that he became utterly silent listening to it. Perhaps Tibetan was such a strange thing to hear. He may never have heard a single word in Tibetan before; he may not even have known that there was a country called Tibet. Even in his death he became utterly attentive and silent. The *Bardo* worked although he could not understand it. Sometimes things you don't understand work; they work just because you don't understand.

Glimpses of a Golden Childhood,
Session 15, 1981

The Transcendent Prince

Born on January 25, l947, Prince Welf of Hanover was the great grandson of the last German Emperor. Like his father, Prince Georg Wilhelm, he is a descendant of the Hanoverian kings of England. His mother, Princess Sophia of Greece, is a sister to Prince Philip Mountbatten of England.

Prince Welf studied at exclusive schools, the Schloss Schule Salem School in Germany, and Gordonstoun, in Scotland, where his cousin, Prince Charles, also studied.

Prince Welf gradually began to move away from his aristocratic upbringing. He studied economics and education at Tubingham University and married his commoner girlfriend rather than a princess. Soon Prince Welf and Wibke, his wife, started participating in therapy groups and eventually moved to the Zist Institute for therapy and led groups there. At Zist they were first introduced to the meditations of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and participated in a group led by two sannyasins.

Just before his final university examinations, Prince Welf, Wibke and their five-year-old daughter, Tania, left Germany and began traveling overland to India. They arrived at the Shree Rajneesh Ashram in Poona in December, 1975.

Following Tania's lead the whole family took sannyas on December 16, 1975. Bhagwan gave him the name Swami Anand Vimalkirti – Anand means bliss, Vimalkirti means purity of essence....

On January 5, 1981, while doing karate warm-up exercises, he collapsed from a cerebral hemorrhage. For five days his body lay in a Poona hospital, being kept alive by respiratory machines. His mother, Princess Sophia, and his brother, Prince Georg, flew out from Germany to be with him.

Vimalkirti's years of meditation gave him the awareness to go beyond all attachments of body, mind and heart. He reached enlightenment on the evening of January 9th and left his body the next morning. His family and all his friends and members of the commune joined in celebration as Bhagwan came and laid roses over Vimalkirti's heart in a parting gesture of the love the master shares with a disciple. Thousands of dancing and singing sannyasins accompanied the body to the burning ghats. "Let him go like a

prince," said Bhagwan "He was *a prince. Each one of my sannyasins is a prince."*

On January 13, to the sound of the Blue Danube Waltz, Vimalkirti's family, joined by his father, Prince Georg Wilhelm, brought the ashes back to the ashram where they were placed in a marble samadhi (memorial) set in a peaceful wooded corner of the ashram.

"He was *a prince! Aristocracy has nothing to do with birth, it has something to do with the quality of the heart. And I experienced him as one of the rarest, most beautiful souls on the earth."*

Beloved Bhagwan,

Is there anything You can say about
what is happening to Vimalkirti?

NOTHING IS HAPPENING to Vimalkirti – exactly nothing because nothing is *nirvana.* The West has no idea of the beauty of nothingness. The whole Western attitude is extrovert, oriented towards things, oriented towards actions. "Nothing" sounds like emptiness – it is not so.

This is one of the greatest discoveries of the East: that nothing is not empty, on the contrary it is just the opposite of emptiness. It is fullness, it is overflowingness.

Break the word "nothing" in two, make it "no-thingness," and then suddenly its meaning changes, the gestalt changes.

Nothing is the goal of sannyas. One has to come to a space where nothing is happening; all happening has disappeared. The doing is gone, the doer is gone, the desire is gone, the goal is gone. One simply is – not even a ripple in the lake of consciousness, no sound.

The Zen people call it the "sound of one hand clapping." Now, one hand clapping cannot create a sound; it is soundless sound, the *omkar,* just silence. But silence is not empty, it is very full. The moment you are absolutely silent, absolutely attuned with nothingness, the whole descends in you, the beyond penetrates you.

But the Western mind has overpowered the whole world: we have become "workaholics," and my whole approach is to help you become zeros. The zero is the most perfect experience in life; it is the experience of ecstasy.

Vimalkirti is blessed. He was one of those few of my chosen sannyasins who never wavered for a single moment, whose truth has been total the whole time he was here. He never asked a question, he never wrote a letter, he never brought any problem. His trust was such that he became by and by absolutely merged with me. He has one of the rarest hearts; that

quality of the heart has disappeared from the world. He is really a prince, really royal, really aristocratic! Aristocracy has nothing to do with birth, it has something to do with the quality of the heart. And I experienced him as one of the rarest, most beautiful souls on the earth.

It is not a question at all of asking about him: "What is happening?"

Of course, one tends to think in the old ways in which one was brought up, and more particularly so about a German!

I have heard:

Little Joey was sitting outside under a tree when he heard his mother cry out from the house, "Joey, what are you doing?"

"Nothing, mom," he answered.

"No? Really, Joey, what are you doing?"

"I said I ain't doing anything."

"Don't lie to me! Tell me what you are doing!"

At this point Joey gave a deep sigh, picked up a stone and tossed it a few feet. "I'm throwing rocks," he said.

"That's what I thought you were doing! Now stop it immediately!"

"Golly," Joey said to himself, "no one will let ya do just nothin' anymore."

Something has to be done...nobody believes – *you* will not believe me when I say Vimalkirti is doing nothing, is just being.

The day he had his hemorrhage I was a little worried about him, hence I told my doctor sannyasins to help him remain in the body at least for seven days. He was doing so beautifully and so fine, and then just to end suddenly when the work was incomplete...he was just on the edge – a little push and he would become a part of the beyond.

Many questions have come to me about what I think of living through artificial methods. Now he is breathing artificially. He would have died the same day – he almost did die. Without these artificial methods he would have already been in another body, he would have entered another womb. But then I will not be available here by the time he comes. Who knows whether he will be able to find a master or not? – and a crazy master like me! And once somebody has been so deeply connected with me, no other master will do. They will look so flat, so dull, so dead!

Hence I wanted him to hang around a little more. Last night he managed: he crossed the boundary from doing to non-doing. That "something" that was still in him dropped. Now he is ready, now we can say goodbye to him, now we can celebrate, now we can give him a good send-off.

Give him an ecstatic *bon voyage*! Let him go with your dance, with your song!

When I went to see him, this is what transpired between me and him.

I waited by his side with closed eyes – he was immensely happy. The body is not at all usable anymore. The surgeons, the neurosurgeons and the other doctors were worried; they were asking again and again, inquiring about what I was up to, why I wanted him to be in the body, because there seemed to be no point in it – even if he somehow managed to survive, his brain would never be able to function rightly. And I would not like him to be in that state. It is better that he goes.

And they were worried about why I wanted him to go on breathing artificially. Even his heart stopped once in a while and then, artificially, his heart had to be stimulated again. His kidneys began to fail yesterday, his skull had been drilled – there was such a great swelling inside. This was something congenital; it was bound to happen – it was a program in his body.

But he managed beautifully: before it could happen he used this life for the ultimate flowering. Just a little bit had remained; last night even that disappeared.

So last night when I told him, "Vimalkirti, now you can go into the beyond with all my blessings," he almost shouted in joy, "Faaar out!" I told him, "Not that far!"

And I told him a story:

The crow came up to the frog and said, "There is going to be a big party in heaven!"

The frog opened his big mouth and said, "Faaar out!"

The crow went on, "There will be great food and drinks!"

And the frog replied, "Faaar out!"

"And there will be beautiful women, and the Rolling Stones will be playing!"

The frog opened his mouth even wider and cried, "Faaar out!"

Then the crow added, "But anyone who has a big mouth won't be allowed in!"

The frog pursed his lips tightly together and mumbled, "Poor alligator! He will be disappointed!"

Vimalkirti is perfectly beautiful. He will not need to come back into a body; he is going awakened, he is going in the state of buddhahood.

So you all have to rejoice, dance and sing and celebrate! You have to learn how to celebrate life and how to celebrate death. Life is really not as great as death can be; but death can be great only if one achieves the fourth state, *turiya*.

Ordinarily it is difficult to get disidentified from the body and the brain and the heart, but it happened very easily to Vimalkirti. He had to become disidentified because the body was already dead – it had been

dead for five days – the brain was already lost, the heart was far away.

This accident is an accident for the people who are on the outside, but for Vimalkirti himself it has proved a blessing in disguise. You cannot get identified with such a body: the kidneys not functioning, the breathing not functioning, the heart not functioning, the brain totally damaged. How can you get identified with such a body? Impossible. Just a little alertness and you will become separate – and that much alertness he had, that much he had grown. So he immediately became aware that "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the heart either." And when you pass beyond these three, the fourth, *turiya,* is attained, and that is your real nature. Once it is attained it is never lost.

He used to love my jokes and this will be the last lecture for him, so...for him:

An Italian couple was rushing to the hospital as the wife was about to have a baby. On the way there was a terrible automobile accident and the husband ended up in the hospital in a coma.

When he finally came to, he was told he had been in a coma for three months and that his wife was fine and he was the proud father of twins, a boy and a girl.

As soon as he could he left the hospital to be with his family and after being home for a little while he asked his wife the names she had given the children.

The wife replied, "Well-a, in keeping with-a Italian-a tradition, I didn't name them. It's-a the man's-a place to name-a the newborn babies, and since you were unconscious the job-a went-a to your brother."

Hearing this, the husband got very upset, saying, "My brother is an idiot-a! He doesn't know-a anything! So what-a did-a he name them?"

The wife said, "He named the girl-a Denise."

"Hey," the husband said, "that's-a not-a bad! And-a the bambino?"

"The boy he named De-nephew."

...These are the "three L's" of my *philosia:* life, love, laughter. Life is only a seed, love is a flower, laughter is a fragrance. Just to be born is not enough, one has to learn the art of living; that is the A of meditation. Then one has to learn the art of loving; that is the B of meditation. And then one has to learn the art of laughing; that is the C of meditation. And meditation has only three letters: A,B,C.

So today you will have to give a beautiful send-off to Vimalkirti. Give it with great laughter.... But he will be around here in your smiles, in your laughter. He will be here in the flowers, in the sun, in the wind, in the rain, because nothing is ever lost – nobody really dies, one becomes part of eternity.

So even though you will feel tears, let those tears be tears of joy – joy

for what he has attained. Don't think of yourself, that you will be missing him; think of him, that he *is* fulfilled.

My whole approach is of celebration. Religion to me is the whole spectrum of celebration, the whole rainbow, all the colors of celebration. Make it a great opportunity for yourself, because in celebrating his departure many of you can reach to greater heights, to new dimensions of being; it will be possible. These are the moments which should not be missed; these are the moments which should be used to their fullest capacity.

Zen: Zest, Zip, Zap and Zing,
January 10, 1981, morning

Beauty Without the Beast

THOSE WHO KNOW meditation, they know something of death – that's the only way to know before dying.

If I am saying there is no more significant experience in life than death, I am saying it not because I have died and come back to tell you, but because I know that in meditation you move into the same space as death – because in meditation you are no more your physiology, no more your biology, no more your chemistry, no more your psychology. All those are left far away.

You come to your innermost center where there is only pure awareness. That pure awareness will be with you when you die because that cannot be taken away. All these other things which can be taken away, we take away with our own hands in meditation.

So meditation is an experience of death in life.

And it is so beautiful, so indescribably beautiful that only one thing can be said about death: it must be that experience multiplied by millions.

The experience of meditation multiplied by millions is the experience of death.

And when you pass on you simply leave your form behind. You are absolutely intact, and for the first time out of the prison of physiology, biology, psychology.

All the walls are broken and you are free. For the first time you can open your wings to the existential.

The Rajneesh Bible, Volume II,
December 3, 1984, evening

PARTY

ENJOY TOTALISM A MOEM
FROM THE SUNSET PEAKS

Beauty Without the Beast

PART V

ENJOY TOTALLY! A VIEW FROM THE SUNLIT PEAKS

From Darkness to Light

Beloved Bhagwan,
Would You say something about
Your father's death yesterday?

IT WAS NOT a death at all. Or it was the total death. And both mean the same thing. I was hoping that he would die in this way. He died a death that everybody should be ambitious for: he died in samadhi, he died utterly detached from the body and the mind.

I went to see him only three times during this whole month he was in the hospital. Whenever I felt that he was just on the verge, I went to see him. The first two times I was a little afraid that if he died he would have to be born again; a little attachment to the body was there. His meditation was deepening every day, but a few chains with the body were still intact, were not broken.

Yesterday I went to see him: I was immensely happy that now he could die a right death. He was no more concerned with the body. Yesterday, early in the morning at three o'clock, he attained his first glimpse of the eternal – and immediately he became aware that now he was going to die. This was the first time he had called me to come; the other two times I had gone on my own. Yesterday he called me to come because he was certain he was going to die. He wanted to say goodbye, and he said it beautifully – with no tears in his eyes, with no longing for life any more.

Hence, in a way it is not a death but a birth into eternity. He died in time and was born into eternity. Or it is a total death – total in the sense that now he will not be coming any more. And that is the ultimate achievement; there is nothing higher than it.

He left the world in utter silence, in joy, in peace. He left the world like a lotus flower – it was worth celebrating. And these are the occasions for you to learn how to live and how to die. Each death should be a celebration, but it can be a celebration only if it leads you to higher planes of existence.

He died enlightened. And that's how I would like each of my sannyasins to die. Life is ugly if you are unenlightened and even death

becomes beautiful if you are enlightened. Life is ugly if you are unenlightened because it is a misery, a hell. Death becomes a door to the divine if you are enlightened; it is no longer a misery, it is no longer a hell. In fact, on the contrary, it is getting out of all hell, out of all misery.

I am immensely glad that he died the way he died. Remember it: as meditation deepens, you become farther and farther away from your body-mind composite. And when meditation reaches its ultimate peak, you can see everything.

Yesterday morning he was absolutely aware of death, that it had come. And he called me. This was the first time he had called me, and the moment I saw him I saw that he was no longer in the body. All the pains of the body had disappeared. That's why the doctors were puzzled: the body was functioning in an absolutely normal way. This was the last thing the doctors could have imagined, that he could die. He could have died any day before. He was in deep pain, there were many complexities in the body: his heart was not functioning well, his pulse was missing; there were blood clots in the brain, in the leg, in the hand.

Yesterday he was absolutely normal. They checked, and they said it was impossible; now there was no problem, no danger. But this is how it happens. The day of the danger, according to the physicians, didn't prove dangerous. The first twenty-four hours when he was admitted into the hospital one month ago were the most dangerous; they were afraid that he would die. He didn't die. Then for the next twenty-four hours they were still hesitant to say whether he would be saved or not. A suggestion had even come from a surgeon to cut the leg off completely, because if blood clots started happening in other places it would be impossible to save him.

But I was against cutting off the leg, because one has to die one day – why distort the body and why create more pain? And just living in itself has no meaning, just lengthening the life has no meaning. I said no. They were surprised. And when he survived for almost four weeks they thought I was right, that there had been no need to cut off the leg; the leg was coming back, becoming alive again. He had started walking also, which Dr. Sardesai thought was a miracle. They had not hoped for that much, that he would be able to walk.

Yesterday he was perfectly normal, everything normal. And that gave me the indication that now death was possible. If meditation happens before death, everything becomes normal. One dies in perfect health, because one is not really dying but entering into a higher plane. The body becomes a stepping-stone.

He was meditating for years. He was a rare man – it is very rare to find a father like him. A father becoming a disciple of his own son: it is rare. Jesus' father did not dare to become a disciple, Buddha's father hesitated

for years to become a disciple. But my father was meditating for years. Three hours each day, in the morning from three to six, he was sitting in meditation. Yesterday also, in the hospital also, he continued.

Yesterday it happened. One never knows when it will happen. One has to go on digging, one day one comes across the source of water, the source of consciousness. Yesterday it happened; it happened in good time. If he had left his body just one day before, he would have been back in the body again soon – a little clinging was there. But yesterday the slate was completely clean. He attained to no-mind, he died like a Buddha. What more can one have than buddhahood?

My effort here is to help you all to live like buddhas and die like buddhas. The death of a buddha is both! It is not a death, because life is eternal. Life does not begin with birth and does not end with death. Millions of times you have been born and died; they are all small episodes in the eternal pilgrimage. But because you are unconscious you cannot see that which is beyond birth and death.

As you become more conscious, you can see your original face. He saw his original face yesterday. He heard the one hand clapping, he heard the soundless sound. Hence it is not a death: it is attaining life eternal. On the other hand it can be called a total death – total death in the sense that he will not be coming any more.

Rejoice!

Be Still and Know,
September 9, 1979, morning

The Undying Reality

ALWAYS GO WITH the river of life. Never try to go against the current, and never try to go faster than the river. Just move in absolute relaxation, so that each moment you are at home, at ease, at peace with existence.

The second thing you have to remember is that life is not short; life is eternal, so there is no question of any hurry. By hurrying you can only miss. In existence do you see any hurry? – seasons come in their time, flowers come in their time. Trees are not running to grow fast because life is short. It seems as if the whole existence is aware of the eternity of life.

We have been here always, and we will be here always – of course not in the same forms, and not in the same bodies. Life goes on evolving, reaching to higher stages. But there is no end anywhere, and there has been no beginning anywhere either. You exist between a beginningless life and an endless life. You are always in the middle of two eternities on both sides.

But always keep in tune with your own nature.

Some trees grow slowly, some trees grow fast; there is nothing special in growing fast, or in growing slowly. One thing is similar in both trees – they are both following their natures.

The Golden Future,
April 27, 1987 evening

Inquire to the Very End

Beloved Bhagwan,

How can we believe that the soul exists
after death and transmigrates to another form
of life, or dissolves into the universe?

I HAVE NEVER asked you to believe in anything. It is my *experience* that the soul exists after death, that it transmigrates into other forms of life, and finally when there is no more to learn, no questions to be answered, no search, no desire – when that ultimate point of absolute contentment, fulfillment, enlightenment arises – then the soul simply dissolves into existence. To transmigrate you need to have a desire to live, a desire to be fulfilled; that's a basic necessity.

It is not *you* who go on being born again and again; it is your desire that goes on and on, never being fulfilled. You are simply following your desire like a shadow.

I have not said that you have to believe it. I would, rather, like you to be skeptical about it, to doubt it, and to inquire into it. I am simply provoking you into an inquiry, not into a faith.

My religion is not a faith.

It is an inquiry into the ultimate truth.

So whatsoever I say, the basic reason behind it is to always inspire you – not to believe in a dogma, but to go on in search.

If I say the soul exists after death, it is only a hypothesis for you.

For me it is an experience.

I don't believe in it; I know it.

When I say the soul transmigrates, to me it is an experience. I remember my past lives. I have transmigrated; there is no question of doubt for me, but I am not saying for you to believe it. What I am trying to do is to make you interested in this strange inquiry into past lives. If I can know my past lives – because they are all imprinted in the unconscious, nothing is ever lost – you can descend the staircase and go into *your* unconscious, and you can start knowing about your past lives. When you know, there is no need to believe – because then you *know*. When you

don't know, never believe, because if you believe you will never know.

And when you know something, it will be simply foolish to believe in it. What will be the point of believing? – you know.

You don't believe in the sun, you don't believe in the roses – you know. You believe in God because you *don't* know. You believe in the soul because you don't know.

The Rajneesh Bible, Volume III
January 11, 1985, evening

A Peep into Yesterday

Beloved Bhagwan,
Occasionally a strong feeling comes over me
that exactly the situation I am in at the moment
has happened before; others tell me
of experiencing the same feeling and that it
has been termed deja vu. *I have always*
wondered what this experience was
and its connection with meditation.
Can You help me to understand it?

THE EXPERIENCE TERMED *deja vu* has a reality of its own because you are not in life for the first time, you have seen many lives, many deaths. And naturally in thousands of lives it is simply impossible not to come to the same places, to meet the same faces, to see a certain tree and feel that you have seen exactly this tree. The feeling is absolutely certain, without any doubt: you are not imagining it; you have seen a certain person before, or you have been in the whole situation before, in every smallest detail.

It is a very strange feeling; one gets dizzy. But it proves that all the religions that have been born outside of India are very incomplete; they cannot explain the experience of *deja vu*. Unless you have the idea of reincarnation, *deja vu* is not explainable. You come into a town and suddenly you feel you have been here. You know that if you go to the right, you will reach the river, and if you go to the left you will reach the railway station – and you try it and you find that you reach the river or you reach the railway station! You recognize the trees on the way, you recognize the river; it is as if you have seen it in a film or perhaps in a dream.

Deja vu is a small fragment from the past, somehow entering into your present. It is a reality. And these are the facts: *deja vu,* memories of past lives which have been confirmed many, many times, make the theory of reincarnation not just a religious theory, but a scientific fact. Any day when science will have more of an open mind....

The trouble is that the whole of scientific progress is happening in the

West, where one life is the accepted concept, so they are all prejudiced with the idea of one life. But the world is becoming smaller every day. Sooner or later, science will have to take note of the phenomenon, because it is so essential for human growth, for meditation, for transforming consciousness – because if you can remember your past lives, it becomes a proof that there is a future after death, too. The remembrance of past lives also proves that after death you will be here in a different form, with a different name.

Also, if it becomes a scientifically proven fact, which I have no doubt it will, once science starts moving in that direction and drops the Christian or the Jewish or the Mohammedan idea of only one life. That is simply stupid, because in existence nothing dies; everything continues, only forms change. Why should it be otherwise as far as life is concerned?

If people become aware that they have lived the same kind of life thousands of times...and this was the use that the theory on reincarnation was put to: to create a great boredom and a fed-upness because you have done all these things before and you have not learned anything, you are again.... For thousands of lives you have been running for power, for money and you are still doing that; it seems every life experience is being erased and you start from ABC again! If it becomes scientifically supported, you will have great difficulty repeating the same stupid games. You have played enough – it is time to change, it is time to raise your consciousness; it is time to go beyond this vicious circle of moving from one life to another, again and again like a wheel.

All you have done up to now has been done out of unconsciousness. Now it is time to be mature and start doing things out of consciousness. Act with awareness; you have acted enough under the influence of unconsciousness.

This wheel that is reincarnation is due to unconsciousness. Once you become conscious, you see there is no point; you have achieved success many times – but what is the point? Death comes and erases everything. It is almost like making castles in the sand – a wind comes and the castle is gone. And you start making another castle, again, and again the same thing will happen.

It is of paramount importance for science not to ignore the fact of millions of people's experience in the East. It is not a superstition; it is one of those mysteries of life of which we remain unaware. Once science starts discovering ways, you will find a great change in your attitude towards things and your focus will change; your focus will be how to get out of the wheel. This wheel is your slavery, and to get out of this slavery has been the only longing of the seekers of truth and freedom.

Once you have realized that your being can remain in the universe

without any body, any form – it can be formless and still be there, spread all over existence – all your efforts will be to attain that great freedom. In the East we have called the ultimate experience of such people *moksha,* which means absolute freedom. Freedom from the body, freedom from the mind, freedom from any kind of chains around you, freedom from form – just a pure consciousness. Still it has an individuality, an invisible center which knows, "I am." In fact, "For the first time I am in my true essence."

Because there is no form, there is no disease; because there is no form, there is no death; because there is no form, there is no old age. A consciousness without form is simply always fresh, young, free, and the whole universe is available to it. Its empire is great.

Once Gautam Buddha was asked, "You say again and again that if you become absolutely conscious you will not be born again into the body and your empire will be the whole existence. But what about many people who become enlightened, have already become enlightened? How can I alone be the master of the whole empire?"

The question seems to be logical, but it is not existential. And Gautam Buddha laughed – he laughed very rarely, not more than three, four times in his whole life. He said, "I can understand your logic but I will tell you one thing. I will give you an example, not a counter-argument.

"In a dark house you can burn one candle, and the whole house will be full of light. You can burn another candle – do you think the light of two candles is going to be in conflict? The second candle will also fill the whole house with its light. You can burn a third candle; you can go on burning candle after candle. They will remain individual in their flames, but as far as their radiated light is concerned, they will all possess the whole room. There will be no division. It is not that this is my territory and that is your territory. And the light is not a thing, so a thousand candles can have their light filling the whole house without any conflict."

He was right. There is no way to counter-argue, but his example is perfect. That's exactly the situation: once you are free of form, you will be spread all over the universe. Millions of other enlightened people are filling the whole universe with their light, with their consciousness. At their center they will have a flame of their own, but their radiation will have no boundaries. The lights don't conflict, they are not things. The same space can be occupied by many lights, without any struggle, without any quarrel. And consciousness is a light.

The New Dawn,
June 23, 1987, morning

Staying Awake Through the Movie

Beloved Bhagwan,

Why didn't Jesus speak about
the possibility of reincarnation of the soul?
This seems to be a difference
between Eastern and Western religions.

JESUS KNEW PERFECTLY well about reincarnation. There are indirect hints spread all over the gospels. Just the other day I was saying, quoting Jesus, "I am before Abraham ever was." And Jesus says, "I will be coming back." And there are a thousand and one indirect references to reincarnation. He knew about it perfectly well, but there is some other reason why he did not preach it.

Jesus had been to India and he had seen what had happened because of the theory of reincarnation. In India for almost five thousand years before Jesus, the theory was taught. And it is a truth, it is not only a theory; the theory is based in truth. Man has millions of lives. It was taught by Mahavira, by Buddha, by Krishna, by Rama; all the Indian religions agree upon it. You will be surprised to know: they don't agree on anything else except this theory.

But why did Jesus, Moses, Mohammed – the sources of the three religions that have been born outside India – not talk about reincarnation directly? For a certain reason, and the reason is that Moses was aware – because Egypt and India have been in constant contact...

It is suspected that once Africa was part of Asia and that the continent has slowly shifted away. India and Egypt were joined together, hence there are so many similarities. And it is not strange that South India is black; it has partly Negro blood in its veins, it is negroid – not totally, but if Africa was joined with Asia then certainly the mingling of the Aryans with the Negroes must have happened, and then South India became black.

Moses must have been perfectly aware of India. You will be surprised

that Kashmir claims that both Moses and Jesus are buried there. The tombs are there, one tomb for Moses and one tomb for Jesus. They saw what happened to India through the theory of reincarnation.

Because of the theory of reincarnation India became very lethargic; there is no hurry. India has no time sense, not even now. Even though everybody is wearing a wristwatch there is no time sense. If somebody says, "I will be coming at five o'clock in the evening to see you," it can mean anything. He may turn up at four, he may turn up at six, he may not turn up at all – and it is not taken seriously! It is not that he is not fulfilling his promise – there is no time sense! How can you have time sense when eternity is available? When there are so many many lives, why be in such a hurry? One can go on slowly; one is bound to arrive some day or other.

The theory of reincarnation made India very lethargic, dull. It made India utterly time-unconscious. It helped people to postpone. And if you can postpone for tomorrow, then today you will remain the same as you have been – and tomorrow never comes. And India knows how to postpone not only to tomorrow but even to the next life.

Moses and Jesus both visited India, both were aware. Mohammed never visited India but was perfectly aware, because he was very close to India and there was constant traffic between India and Arabia. They decided it was better to tell people, "There is only one life, this is the *last* chance – the first and the last – if you miss it you miss forever." This is a device to create intense longing, to create such intensity in people that they can be transformed easily.

Then the question arises: Were Mahavira, Buddha and Krishna not aware? Were they not aware that this theory of reincarnation would create lethargy? They were trying a totally different device. And each device has its time; once it is used – it cannot be used forever – people become accustomed to it. When Buddha, Mahavira and Krishna tried the device of reincarnation they were trying it from a totally different angle.

India was a very rich country in those days. It was thought to be the golden country of the world, the richest. And in a rich country the real problem, the greatest problem, is boredom. That is happening now in the West. Now America is in the same situation, and boredom has become the greatest problem. People are utterly bored, so bored that they would like to die.

Krishna, Mahavira and Buddha used this situation. They told people, "This is nothing, one life's boredom is nothing. You have lived for many lives, and remember, if you don't listen you are going to live many more lives; you will be bored again and again and again. It is the same wheel of life and death moving."

They painted boredom in such dark colors that people who were

already bored with even one life became really very deeply involved with religion. One has to get rid of life and death; one has to get out of this wheel, this vicious circle of life and death. Hence it was relevant in those days.

Then India became poor. Once the country became poor boredom disappeared. A poor man is never bored, remember; only a rich man can afford boredom, it is a rich man's privilege. It is impossible for a poor man to feel boredom; he has no time. The whole day he is working; when he comes home he is so tired he falls asleep. He need not have many entertainments – television and movies and music and art and museums – he need not have all these things, he *cannot* have them. His only entertainment is sex: a natural thing, inbuilt. That's why poor countries go on producing more children than rich countries – the only entertainment....

The moment India became poor the theory of reincarnation became an escape, a hope – rather than a boredom it became a hope, a possibility to postpone. "I am poor in this life. Nothing to be worried about; there are many lives. Next life I am going to strive a little harder and I will be richer. This life I have got an ugly woman. Nothing to be worried about; it is only a question of one life. Next time I am not going to make the same mistake again. This time I am suffering from my past karmas. This life I will not commit any wrong things so that I can enjoy the coming life." It became postponement.

Jesus saw it, that the device was no longer working, no longer working in the way it was meant to work. The situation had changed. Now Jesus had to create another device: there is only one life – so if you want to be religious, if you want to meditate, if you want to become a sannyasin, *be one right now* – because tomorrow is not reliable. There may be no tomorrow.

Hence the West has become too conscious of time; everybody is in a hurry. This hurry is because of Christianity. The device has again failed. No device can work forever.

My own experience is that a particular device works only while the master is alive, because he is the soul of it; he manages it in such a way that it works. Once the master is gone, the device falls out of use or people start finding new interpretations for it.

Now in the West the device has failed utterly; now it has become a problem. People are in a constant hurry, tension, anxiety, because there is only one life. Jesus wanted them to remember: because there is one life, remember God. And what are they doing? Seeing that there is only one life they want to drink, eat and be merry, because there is no other life.

So indulge as much as you can. Squeeze the whole juice of life right now! And who cares about what will happen on Judgment Day? Who

knows whether Judgment Day is there or not?

Such a hurry! Speed is the mania, faster and faster. Nobody is bothered about where you are going, but you have to go fast; invent speedier vehicles.

And this whole thing has happened because of the device. It worked in Jesus' time. He was continually telling his people, "Beware! The Day of Judgment is very close by. You are going to see the end of the world in your very own life and there is no other life. And if you miss you will be thrown into hell for eternity!" He was simply creating a psychological atmosphere. It worked when he was alive and it worked for a few more days when he was gone. It continued to work for a few days because of the closest disciples who had something of the climate of Jesus with them, some aura, but then it created just the opposite effect.

It has created the *most* worldly civilization the world has ever known. And the desire was that the idea of one life would make people so alert and aware that they would seek and search for God and they would drop all other desires and all other occupations. Their whole life would become one-pointedly a search, an inquiry, for God. That was the idea behind the device. But the ultimate result is that people have become absolutely worldly, because there is no other life, only one life – enjoy it the most you can! Enjoy it, don't postpone it for tomorrow.

The Indian device failed because people became lethargic. It worked with Buddha. He really created one of the greatest movements in the world. Thousands of people renounced their lives, became sannyasins. That means they devoted their whole energy to the search for truth, because he created such an atmosphere of boredom – that you would be bored if you missed.

But what happened later on was just the opposite. It is always going to be so. The masters are bound to be misunderstood. And people are so cunning, so diplomatic, they can always find ways to destroy the whole device.

Jesus knows perfectly that life is eternal, reincarnation is a fact. He mentions it in indirect ways, maybe to his very close disciples he mentions it, but not to the masses – for a simple reason: he has seen that it failed in India, something else has to be tried.

I am creating many devices because others have failed. I know perfectly well that my devices will function only while I am here; they are bound to fail as every other device has failed. I am not living in any fool's paradise thinking that my devices will remain as I create them forever. When I am not there, people are going to distort them. But that is natural, it has to be accepted; there is nothing to worry about.

Hence those who are here, please be alert and use these devices as

deeply as possible. While I am here these devices will function perfectly well. In *my* hands they can be great situations for inner transformation, but once my hands are no more visible these same devices will be in the hands of the pundits and the scholars, and then the same story will be repeated as it has been in the past.

Beware, be watchful, don't waste time.

Be Still and Know,
September 4, 1979, morning

The Right to Die

PEOPLE ORDINARILY THINK that when they retire, they will rest and relax and enjoy. But when they really retire they find rest is impossible, relaxation is impossible, because their whole life they have been practicing restlessness, anxiety, tension, anguish. Now suddenly, just because they are retired, their bodies cannot change their old habits, sixty-year-old habits.

And old age is becoming longer; in Europe, to be eighty, ninety, one hundred, one hundred and twenty, is not rare. In the Soviet Union, particularly in one part, in the Caucasus, there are people, thousands, who have passed one hundred and fifty years of age. And there are a few hundred who have even reached the age of one hundred and eighty. They are still working in the fields, in the orchards, in the gardens – they demand work. You cannot retire a man who is going to live to one hundred and eighty years when he is sixty. He has lived only one-third of his life; two-thirds are still there, remaining empty. You will have to give him some work.

But work is going to be taken over by machines, because they do it better, more efficiently, more quickly. Where one thousand people were needed, just one machine can manage. Where ten thousand people were needed, just one computer can manage the whole thing. But what about those one thousand or ten thousand people? These people would like to die.

There are movements around the world, in advanced countries, where old people are demanding a constitutional right to commit suicide – and you cannot say they are wrong. They say, "We have lived enough and now to go on dragging ourselves is unnecessary torture. We want to go to rest in our graves. We have seen everything, we have experienced everything. Now there is nothing for us to hope for or dream about or desire. Tomorrow is empty and frightens us – it is better to die."

Hence, there is a movement and I am in support of it: the movement for euthanasia. Every government should provide, in every hospital, facilities for people who want to die. Perhaps you can make a limit. After

eighty years, if somebody wants to die, you should make beautiful arrangements in the hospital so he can rest, invite his friends, meet with his friends, old colleagues, listen to great music, listen to novels or poetry, can see the best films, because this is the last month.

Why unnecessarily harass people? Just give them an injection which takes them deeper and deeper into sleep, which turns finally into death. I am absolutely certain; governments will have to yield to it, and medical science will have to yield to it, because it seems so absolutely human that if someone has lived enough – his children have become old, his children are sixty, they are getting towards retirement – now it is time.

You are not free to be born but at least you should be given the freedom to die, to choose the date and the time. It should become part of our basic human rights.

Zarathustra: A God That Can Dance,
March 28, 1987, evening

Celebration Knows Nothing of Death

DEATH IS IN the service of life. Life never dies. But in unconsciousness you go on doing things that you are not clearly aware why you are doing them. You go on moving because everybody else is moving, but you don't know where you are moving and for what. You go on living because everybody else is living, but without any consciousness.

Why? Why should you wake up tomorrow morning and still go on breathing? Your whole past proves that it has been nothing but an exercise in futility and you know perfectly well you will be repeating it as long as you are alive – unless by accident you come across a man who is awake. And the awakened people have become so few, as centuries have passed, that it is improbable that you will come across an awakened person.

But only the awakened person can wake you up, shake you up, can give you a little consciousness of what you are doing: this is not life; this is only a slow death which will be completed in seventy or seventy-five years' time. You are dying every day, every moment. The great masses of the world know only slow death. Only very few people who have become awakened have known the tremendous tidal wave of life.

This is your life. Why are you doing things? Why are you buying things? How are you spending your life? You are not at all aware. You are just a sleepwalker, a somnambulist. Anybody can cheat you – the politicians are doing it, the priests are doing it, but in your unconsciousness it is absolutely natural. Only a conscious man cannot be exploited. Only a conscious man really lives, and those who really live die peacefully, silently, with a smile on their faces. For these people who die with a smile on their face, there is no death – because deep down in their consciousness there is an absolute certainty that it is only the body that is being dropped. Life has continued always and will continue always.

The Hidden Splendor,
March 17, 1987, morning

Learn the Art While There Is Still Time

YOU ARE SAD? – start singing, praying, dancing. Whatsoever you can do, do, and by and by, the baser metal is changed into a higher metal – gold. Once you know the key, your life will never be the same again. You can unlock any door. And this is the master key: to celebrate everything.

I have heard about three Chinese mystics – nobody knows their names. They were known only as the "Three Laughing Saints," because they never did anything else; they simply laughed. They moved from one town to another, laughing. They would stand in the marketplace and have a good belly laugh. The whole marketplace would surround them. All the people would come, shops would close and customers would forget for what they had come.

These three people were really beautiful – laughing and their bellies waving. And then it would become an infection and others would start laughing. Then the whole marketplace would laugh. They had changed the quality of the market.

And if somebody would say, "Say something to us," they would say, "We have nothing to say. We simply laugh and change the quality." When just a few moments before it was an ugly place where people were thinking only of money – hankering for money, greedy, money the only milieu around – suddenly these three mad people came and they laughed, and changed the quality of the whole marketplace. Now nobody was a customer. Now they had forgotten that they had come to purchase and sell. Nobody bothered about greed. They were laughing and they were dancing around these three mad people. For a few seconds a new world opened.

They moved all over China, from place to place, from village to village, just helping people to laugh. Sad people, angry people, greedy people, jealous people: they all started laughing with them. And many people felt the key – you can transform.

Then in one village it happened that one of the three died. Village people gathered and they said, "Now there will be trouble. Now we have to see how they laugh. Their friend has died; they must weep." But when they came, the two were dancing, laughing and celebrating the death. The village people said, "Now this is too much. This is unmannerly. When a man is dead it is profane to laugh and dance."

But they said, "You don't know what has happened! All three of us were always thinking of who was going to die first. This man has won; we are defeated. The whole life we laughed with him. How can we give him the last send-off with anything else? – we have to laugh, we have to enjoy, we have to celebrate. This is the only farewell that is possible for the man who has laughed his whole life. And if we don't laugh, he will laugh at us and he will think, 'You fools! So you have fallen again into the trap?' We don't see that he is dead. How can laughter die, how can life die?"

Laughter is eternal, life is eternal, celebration continues. Actors change but the drama continues. Waves change but the ocean continues. You laugh, you change and somebody else laughs, but laughter continues. You celebrate, somebody else celebrates, but celebration continues. Existence is continuous, it is a container. There is not a single moment's gap in it. But the village people could not understand and they could not participate in the laughter this day.

Then the body was to be burned, and the village people said, "We will give him a bath as the ritual prescribes." But those two friends said, "No, our friend has said, 'Don't perform any ritual and don't change my clothes and don't give me a bath. You just put me as I am on the burning pyre.' So we have to follow his instructions."

And then, suddenly, there was a great happening. When the body was put on the fire, that old man had played the last trick. He had hidden many fireworks under his clothes, and suddenly there was a big Festival of Lights. Then the whole village started laughing. These two mad friends were dancing, then the whole village started dancing. It was not a death, it was a new life.

No death is death, because every death opens a new door – it is a beginning. There is no end to life, there is always a new beginning, a resurrection.

If you change your sadness to celebration, then you will also be capable of changing your death into resurrection. So learn the art while there is still time. Don't let death come before you have learned the secret alchemy of changing baser metals into higher metals. Because if you can change sadness, you can change death. If you can be celebrating unconditionally, when death comes you will be able to laugh, you will be able to

celebrate, you will go happy. And when you can go celebrating, death cannot kill you. Rather, on the contrary you have killed death. But start it, give it a try. There is nothing to lose.

Yoga: The Alpha and the Omega, Volume IV,
April 30, 1975

Wake Up and Sing

Beloved Bhagwan,
How is it possible to relax
in the certainty of death?

FIRST, IT IS possible to relax *only* when death is a certainty. Relaxing is difficult when things are uncertain. If you know that you are going to die today, all fear of death will disappear. What is the point in wasting time? You have one day to live; live as intensely as possible, live as totally as possible.

It actually happened in a man's life – his doctor told him, "You have only six months more to live, not a single day more, so if you want to finish anything, finish it. If you have wanted to do anything, do it."

The man was very rich, and he always had an idea to go around the world to visit all the beautiful places, but there were so many problems that he was continuously postponing it. Now there was no time to postpone. He ordered beautiful clothes to be made for him. People had never known him to be so extravagant. He was eating the best food, he purchased the best house in the town, he closed all his businesses. What was the need to keep them? For six months, he had more than enough – he could live like a king.

He went around the world, visiting all the beautiful places, all the beautiful people of the world. In fact, he simply forgot to die. By the time he was back home, six months had passed a long time before. He went to the doctor to thank him.

The doctor said, "Are you still alive? How did you manage? – because the disease was such that you were going to die within six months."

The man said, "Once it became certain that I was going to die, death was no longer a problem but a certainty. I had six months to live, so I wanted to live as multidimensionally as possible. And by living so totally and so intensely, perhaps I forgot to die at the right time."

The doctor checked him – his disease had disappeared. These six months had been of such relaxed, deep, joyful enjoyment that the disease had to disappear!

The certainty of death is one of the most fortunate things. And death has never been so certain – so certain for the whole humanity. In fact, people should stop creating war materials. Instead of fighting with their neighbors, they should start singing and dancing with them. The time is so short, you cannot afford to fight. People should forget all their differences of religion, and communism, socialism and fascism. All these differences are good when you have enough time, but time is very short. You cannot afford all these differences of being Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan.

Just the shortage of time and the certainty of a global death can bring a transformation. Perhaps you may find yourself in the same position as this man, that the world stops being divided into nations, being divided into religions, continuously fighting, and we start for the first time enjoying this beautiful planet together.

Death may not come, death cannot come to people who live very intensely and very totally. And even if it comes, those people who have lived totally welcome it because it is a great relief. They are tired of living, they lived so totally, so intensely, so death comes like a friend. Just as night comes after the whole day's hard work as a great relaxation, as a beautiful sleep, so does death. Death has nothing ugly about it; you cannot find anything cleaner.

If the fear of death comes in, that means there are a few loopholes which are not filled with living. So those fears of death are very indicative and helpful – they show you that your dance has to go a little faster, that you have to burn the torch of your life from both ends together.

Dance so fast that the dancer disappears, and only the dance remains.

Then it is not possible for any fear of death to visit you.

If you are totally herenow, who cares about tomorrow? Tomorrow will take care of itself. Jesus is right when he prays to God, "Lord, give me my daily bread." He is not even asking for tomorrow, just today is enough unto itself. And you have to learn that each moment has a completion.

The fear of having to leave it all comes only because you are not completely living in the moment; otherwise there is no time, and there is no mind, and there is no space.

In fact, my continual emphasis that there is a possibility of this whole world being destroyed is to help you to live intensely right now because there may not be any tomorrow.

You are in a very special position in the history of mankind. People have always had time to postpone – you don't have. Your situation is unique. Use it – not for worrying, because that is not going to stop the world from ending. Use whatever time is left to live so deeply that ten years become almost equivalent to one hundred years.

Once a merchant was asked, "How old are you?"

And he said, "Three hundred and sixty years old."

The man could not believe it. He said, "Please repeat it. Perhaps I have not heard rightly."

The merchant shouted and said, "Three hundred and sixty years old."

The man said, "Forgive me, but I cannot believe it. You don't look more than sixty!"

The merchant said, "You are also right. As far as the calendar is concerned, I am sixty. But as far as my life is concerned, I have lived six times more than anybody else. In sixty years, I have managed to live three hundred and sixty years."

It depends on intensity.

There are two ways of living. One is the way of the buffalo – it lives horizontally, in a single line. The other way is of a buddha. He lives vertically, in height and in depth. Then each moment can become an eternity. And unless you learn the art of transforming each moment into an eternity, you have not been with me – you have missed.

The world may end, may not end, that is not my concern. But I will go on insisting that it is going to end for a simple reason: to wake you up. And don't waste your time in trivia, but live, sing, dance, love as totally and overflowingly as you are capable of; and no fears will interfere, and you will not be worried what will happen tomorrow. Today is enough unto itself. Lived, it is so full; it leaves no space to think about anything else. Unlived, worries come, fears come.

It is not only me who is emphasizing the fact that the world is coming to an end. It is just a coincidence that alongside my insistence on it, the world situation is very supportive of what I am saying. But Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago, was saying the same thing; Gautam Buddha, twenty-five centuries ago, was saying the same thing.

It is an old device to wake you up. Unless you know that your house is on fire, you are not going to run out of it. And Jesus and Gautam Buddha were using it as a device without any corresponding reality.

I am also using it as a device, but it is not *only* a device. For the first time, the world is really in a position to commit a global suicide.

You just live, love, and make each moment a deep ecstasy. All fears may disappear. And if the whole humanity listens to me, perhaps the world may not end, perhaps we may continue. The old man may die, and a totally new man with fresh values may arise to replace him.

The Golden Future,
May 24, 1987, morning

SOME BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS AND EVENTS FROM THE LIFE OF BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH

The Childhood Years

1931 Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was born in Kuchwada, Madhya Pradesh, India, on December 11, 1931, the eldest son of a modest cloth merchant who belonged to the Jain religion. He spent His first seven years with His grandparents who allowed Him absolute freedom to do exactly as He liked, and who fully supported His early and intense investigations into the truth about life.

1938 After the death of His grandfather, He went to live with His parents at Gadawara, a town of 20,000. His grandmother moved to the same town and remained His most generous friend until she died in 1970, declaring herself to be a disciple of her grandson.

1946 Bhagwan experienced His first satori at 14 years of age. Over the years, His experiments with meditation deepened. The intensity of His spiritual search took its toll on His physical condition. His parents and friends feared He might not live long.

The University Years

1953 At the age of 21, on March 21, 1953, Bhagwan attained enlightenment, the highest peak of human consciousness. Here, He said, His outer biography ended, and He has since lived in an egoless state of at-oneness with the inner laws of life. Outwardly, He continued to pursue His studies at the University of Saugar, from which He graduated with First Class Honors in Philosophy in 1956. He was All-India Debating Champion and won the Gold Medal in His graduating class.

1957 Bhagwan taught at the Sanskrit College, Raipur. A year later He became philosophy professor at the University of Jabalpur. He gave up this post in 1966 in order to dedicate Himself entirely to the task of teaching modern man the art of meditation. Throughout the sixties, He traveled the length and breadth of India as the "Acharya (teacher) Rajneesh," arousing the wrath

of the Establishment wherever He went. He exposed the hypocrisy of the vested interests and their attempts to obstruct man's access to his greatest human right – the right to be himself. He addressed audiences of tens of thousands of people, touching the hearts of millions.

The Bombay Years

1968 He settled in Bombay, living and teaching there. Regularly, He held "meditation camps," mostly in hill stations, where He introduced His revolutionary Dynamic Meditation, a technique that helps to stop the mind by first allowing it to cathart. From 1970 He started initiating people into Neo-Sannyas, a path of commitment to self-exploration and meditation, helped by His love and personal guidance. He began to be called "Bhagwan" – "The Blessed One."

1970 The first seekers from the West arrived, among them many professional people. Bhagwan's fame began to spread throughout Europe, America, Australia and Japan. The monthly Meditation Camps continued and in 1974 a new place was found in Poona, where the teaching could be intensified.

The Poona Years

1974 On the 21st anniversary of Bhagwan's enlightenment, the ashram in Poona opened. The radius of Bhagwan's influence became worldwide. At the same time, Bhagwan retreated more and more into the privacy of His room, emerging only twice daily: lecturing in the morning and initiating and advising seekers in the evenings.

Therapy groups combining Eastern insight into meditation with Western psychotherapy were created. Within two years, the ashram earned a reputation as "the world's finest growth and therapy center." Bhagwan's lectures encompassed all the great religious traditions of the world. At the same time, His vast erudition in Western science and thought, His clarity of speech and depth of argument made the time-honored gap between East and West disappear for His listeners. His lectures, taped and transcribed into books, fill hundreds of volumes and have been absorbed by hundreds of thousands of readers. By the late seventies, Bhagwan's ashram in Poona had become a mecca to

modern seekers of truth. Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai, a devout traditional Hindu, thwarted all attempts of Bhagwan's disciples to move their ashram to a remote corner of India where they would be able to experiment with applying Bhagwan's teachings to create a self-sufficient community living in meditation, love, creativity and laughter.

1980 An attempt was made to murder Bhagwan at one of His lectures by a member of a traditional Hindu sect. Although the official religions and churches opposed Him in the East and in the West, Bhagwan by then had over a quarter of a million disciples worldwide.

A New Phase – Rajneeshpuram, USA

1981 On May 1st Bhagwan stopped speaking and entered a phase of "silent heart-to-heart communion" while His body, now seriously ill from a back condition, was resting. He was taken to the USA by His doctors and caretakers in view of possible emergency surgery. His American disciples purchased a 64,000 acre ranch in the Central Oregon desert. They invited Bhagwan there – where He recovered rapidly. A model agricultural commune evolved around Him with breathtaking speed and impressive results, reclaiming overgrazed and depleted land from the desert and turning it into a green oasis feeding a city of 5,000.
At yearly summer festivals held for Bhagwan's friends from all over the world, up to 20,000 visitors were housed and fed at this new city of Rajneeshpuram.
Parallel to the rapid growth of the commune in Oregon, large communes sprang up in all major Western countries, and Japan, supported by their own independent businesses.
Bhagwan had by then applied for permanent residence in the U.S. as a religious leader, but was refused by the American government; one of the reasons given was His vow of public silence.
At the same time the new city was under increasing legal attack from the Oregon government and the Christian majority in the state. Oregon's land use laws, meant to protect the environment, became a major weapon in the fight against a city that had put enormous effort into reclaiming barren land and enhancing the environment – in fact a city which had become an ecological model for the world.
In October 1984, Bhagwan started speaking to small groups in

His residence, and in July 1985 He started giving public discourses every morning to thousands of seekers in Rajneesh Mandir.

1985 On September 14, Bhagwan's personal secretary and several members of the commune's management suddenly left, and a whole pattern of illegal acts committed by them came to light. Bhagwan invited the American authorities to the city to fully investigate the matter. The authorities used this opportunity to accelerate their fight against the commune.

On October 29, Bhagwan was arrested without a warrant in Charlotte, NC. At the bail hearings He was put in chains. The trip back to Oregon where He was to appear in court – normally a five hour flight – took four days. For two of those days there was no trace of Bhagwan. Later He revealed that in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary He was signed in under the name of "David Washington" and put into an isolation cell with a prisoner suffering from infectious herpes, a disease that could have proven fatal for Bhagwan.

Just an hour before being finally released, after a 12-day ordeal in prisons and chains, a bomb was discovered at the Portland, Oregon jail in which Bhagwan was kept. Everybody was evacuated except Bhagwan, who was kept inside for an hour.

In mid-November His lawyers urged Him to plead guilty to two of thirty-four minor "immigration violations" with which He had been charged, so as to avoid further risks to His life in the hands of the American judicial system. Bhagwan acquiesced and entered an "Alford plea," a plea peculiar to the US judicial system, whereby He could accept the contention of guilt while at the same time maintain His innocence. He was fined four hundred thousand dollars and ordered to leave the USA, not to return for five years. He left by private jet the same day and flew to India, where He rested in the Himalayas.

A week later, the Oregon commune decided to disperse.

In a press conference, U.S. Attorney Charles Turner made three telling points in answering the question: Why weren't the charges brought against His secretary also brought against Bhagwan? Turner said that the government's first priority was to destroy the commune and that the authorities knew that the removal of Bhagwan would precipitate this. Second, they did not want to make Bhagwan a martyr. Third, there was no evidence whatsoever implicating Him in any of the crimes.

Dec. 1985 — Bhagwan's new secretary, His companion, His doctor and other western disciples accompanying Him were ordered out of India, their visas cancelled. No reason was given by the Indian government for this unprecedented action except, "You are not wanted here." Bhagwan left to join them in Kathmandu, Nepal, where He resumed His daily discourses.

Feb. 1986 — Bhagwan went to *Greece* on a 30-day tourist visa, where He lived in the villa of a Greek film producer and started to speak twice daily. Disciples flocked to hear Him. The Greek Orthodox clergy threatened the Greek government that blood would flow unless Bhagwan was thrown out of the country.

Mar. 5 1986 — Police broke into the villa and arrested Bhagwan without warrant, shunting Him off to Athens where only a twenty-five thousand dollar bribe could move the authorities not to put Him on the boat to India.

Mar. 6 1986 — He left in a private jet for *Switzerland* where His 7-day visa was cancelled by armed policemen upon arrival. He was declared 'persona non grata' because of "immigration offenses in the United States" and asked to leave.

He flew on to *Sweden* where He was met the same way – surrounded by rifled policemen. He was told He was "a danger to national security," and ordered to leave immediately.

He flew on to *England*. His pilots were now legally bound to rest for eight hours. Bhagwan wanted to wait in the First Class Transit Lounge, but He was not allowed; nor was He allowed to stay in a hotel overnight. Instead, He and His companions were locked up in a small, dirty cell crowded with refugees.

Mar. 7 1986 — Bhagwan and His group flew to *Ireland*, where they were given tourist visas. They went to a hotel near Limerick. The next morning police arrived and ordered them to leave immediately.

However, this was not possible because *Canada* had by then refused Bhagwan's plane permission to land at Gander for refuelling on the intended flight to *Antigua* in the Caribbean.

This extraordinary denial of the right to refuel was made in spite of a bond from Lloyds of London guaranteeing that Bhagwan would not step outside the plane.
On the condition that there was no publicity that might embarrass the authorities, He was allowed to remain in Ireland until other arrangements could be made.
During the wait, Antigua withdrew permission for Bhagwan to go there. *Holland*, when asked, also refused Bhagwan.
Germany had already passed a 'preventive decree' not to allow Bhagwan to enter their country. In *Italy*, His tourist visa application remained stalled – and in fact has still not been granted 15 months later.

Mar. 19 1986 At the last moment, *Uruguay* turned up with an invitation, and so, on March 19th, Bhagwan, His devotees and fellow travelers flew to Montevideo via Dakar, Senegal.
Uruguay even opened up the possibility of permanent residence. However, in Uruguay it was discovered why He was being denied access to every country He tried to enter – telexes with "diplomatic secret information" (all from NATO government sources) mentioning INTERPOL rumors of "smuggling charges, drug dealing and prostitution" concerning Bhagwan's circle had invariably preceded them to their prospective host countries. The source of these stories was found to be the USA. Uruguay soon came under the same pressure.

May 14 1986 The government decided to announce at a press conference that Bhagwan had been granted permanent residence in Uruguay.

That night Sanguinetti, the President of Uruguay, received a call from Washington, DC, saying that if Bhagwan stayed in Uruguay, current US loans of six billion dollars would be called in, and no future loans given. Bhagwan was requested to leave Uruguay by June 18th. On the day after He left, Sanguinetti and Reagan announced from Washington a new US loan to Uruguay of one hundred and fifty million dollars.

Jun. 19 1986 *Jamaica* granted Bhagwan a 10-day visa. Moments after He landed there, a US navy jet landed next to Bhagwan's private jet, and two civilians descended. The next morning, the visas of Bhagwan and His group were cancelled, "for reasons of national security."

Bhagwan flew on to Lisbon via Madrid, and remained "undiscovered" for some time. A few weeks later policemen were placed around the villa where He was resting. Bhagwan decided to return back to India the next day, July 28.

In all, twenty-one countries had either deported Him or denied Him entry.

Jul. 29 1986 — Bhagwan arrived in Bombay, India, where He settled for six months as a personal guest of an Indian friend. In the privacy of His host's home, He resumed His daily discourses.

Jan. 4 1987 — Bhagwan moved into the house at the ashram in Poona where He had lived for the major part of the seventies. Immediately upon Bhagwan's arrival, the police chief of Poona ordered Him to leave on the grounds that He was a "controversial person" who may "disturb the tranquility of the city." The order was revoked the same day by the Bombay High Court. The same Hindu fanatic who, in May 1980, tried to murder Bhagwan by throwing a knife at Him during a public lecture began making aggressive threats about forcing his way into the ashram with 200 commandoes trained in martial arts – unless Bhagwan was expelled from Poona.

At the same time Indian Embassies around the world, and immigration officers at Bombay airport, began refusing entry to westerners "known to be followers of Acharya Rajneesh."

Nov. 6 1987 — After a 7-week illness in which a simple infection failed to respond to any treatment, Bhagwan's physicians diagnosed a general deterioration of His physical condition due to poisoning; a further analysis concluded thalium poisoning. During public discourse, Bhagwan stated that He believed the government of the U.S.A. had slow-poisoned Him during the 12 days He was in their custody in September 1985.

Feb. 1988 — At the time of writing, despite the 1988 attempts of the governments of the "free world" to isolate Bhagwan in virtual internal exile, thousands of disciples have managed to travel to Poona to be with their Master once again.

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maybe tomorrow,
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But still, those who are aware
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ISBN 3-89338-029-9

08-CEQ-816

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